METRO / A17

Children of Leviste's victim want 2nd autopsy to prove he was murdered

BUSINESS / B1

Stocks surge to highest in nearly 10 years

WORLD / A19

Cuban leader Fidel Castro in serious condition after 3 failed operations

ACROSS / A15

Palace fails to get 14 Pampanga mayors to back Lapids

NEWS / A9

Jinggoy protests Davide posting as envoy to UN

Vanity thy name is man: Plastic surgery going up

DI NA
TAKOT SA
RETOKE!

WASHINGTON—LOOK who's getting a nip and tuck.

Once considered women's domain, cosmetic surgery is increasingly attracting American men keen on remaining competitive in the workplace, improving their love life or getting rid

VANITY/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Wednesday, January 17, 2007 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 40 P18 website: inquirer.net

Naia to collect P200 security fee on Feb. 1

By Nikko Dizon

THE AIRPORT AUTHORITY WILL START COLLECTING on Feb. 1 a P200 security and development fee from each passenger flying out of Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia).

Overseas Filipino workers will be exempted from paying the airport charge.

All other passengers will be required to pay the

NAIA/ A4

Dismissed officials dig in

DILG: Vacate offices in 48 hours or else ...

By Norman Bordadora, *in Manila*
Anselmo Roque, *Inquirer Central Luzon*
and Nestor P. Burgos Jr., *Inquirer Visayas*

INTERIOR SECRETARY RONALDO PUNO YESTERDAY gave dismissed and suspended local executives 48 hours to leave their respective offices to ensure that government functions are not hampered.

If the local executives refuse to yield by Thursday, Interior Undersecretary Wencelito Andanar said the Philippine National Police would be called upon to enforce the law.

Dismissed Iloilo Gov. Niel Tupas, Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad of Pasay City and Mayor Antonio Prospero Esquivel of Jaen, Nueva Ecija, and suspended Batangas Gov. Armand Sanchez have ignored orders from the Department of Interior and Local Government to vacate their posts.

The Office of the Ombudsman had either dismissed or suspended these four officials for their alleged involvement in graft. *(See related story on Page A18.)*

"It's business as usual and I am still the governor," said Tupas, who was holed up in the governor's office on the third floor of the five-story provincial capitol in Iloilo.

Around 700 of Tupas' supporters continued their camp-out on the grounds of the capitol. The operations of its offices have returned to normal but entry to the building was still restricted.

Esquivel said he would step down only after he would have exhausted all legal means to contest his dismissal.

Esquivel, along with hundreds of his supporters, has been staying in the town hall since Monday night.

Sanchez, for his part, is seeking a tempo-

DISMISSED/ A13

LYN RILLON

'AFTERGLO': "Let us savor this monumental triumph of the Philippines," President Arroyo exults during a roundtable meeting at the Palace as she also wraps up the achievements of the 12th Asean and East Asian summits in Cebu City.

'Plunder may still be filed vs Nani if there's new evidence'

By Norman Bordadora

NEW EVIDENCE MAY STILL BE PRESENTED against former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez so he can be charged with plunder, a nonbailable offense, according to the Office of the Ombudsman.

Despite the signed complaint-affidavit he submitted to the Ombudsman showing that he charged Perez with plunder on Dec. 23, 2002, Jimenez appeared to be no longer interested in pursuing plunder, a capital offense, against Perez.

He said last week that he didn't charge Perez with plunder.

Assistant Special Prosecutor Marina Demeterio said the Ombudsman panel that looked into Perez's alleged extortion of $2 million from ex-Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez in 2001 saw no case for plunder when it looked at the available evidence.

PLUNDER/ A13

JANET NEPALES

QUEENLY Helen Mirren scores twice over for Elizabeth I, II roles.

JANET NEPALES

THE HEAVENLY Meryl Streep scores a Golden Globe record.

'Babel' and 'Dreamgirls' bag Golden Globe awards

BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA—The searing cultural drama "Babel" and the uplifting musical "Dreamgirls" won the top Golden Globe awards on Monday, making them instant front-runners for the Oscars.

Veteran filmmaker Martin Scorsese took home the prize for best director with his crime thriller "The Departed," a darling of critics. It was the second Globe for the filmmaker, boosting his prospects of finally winning an Oscar after five nominations, all losses.

"I swear I have my papers in order, Governor, I swear," joked "Babel" director Alejandro Gon-

BABEL/ A6

'Babel' wins best drama

"Babel" and "Dreamgirls" were named best motion pictures at Monday's Golden Globes.

MOTION PICTURE AWARDS

Drama	"Babel"
Actor	Forest Whitaker, "The Last King of Scotland"
Actress	Helen Mirren, "The Queen"
Mus./Com.	"Dreamgirls"
Actor	Sacha Baron Cohen, "Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan"
Actress	Meryl Streep, "The Devil Wears Prada"
Sup. Actor	Eddie Murphy, "Dreamgirls"
Sup. Actress	Jennifer Hudson, "Dreamgirls"
Director	Martin Scorsese, "The Departed"

SOURCE: Hollywood Foreign Press Association AP

2 winners have distinct ties with the Philippines

By Ruben V. Nepales
Los Angeles Correspondent

BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA—The top winners for best dramatic performances at the 64th Golden Globe Awards have distinct ties to the Philippines.

Helen Mirren, named best actress by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (of which this reporter is a voting member) for her separate portrayals of Elizabeth I and Elizabeth II, said she had a brother who married a Fil-

2 WINNERS/ A6

SPECIAL PEOPLE

Autistic artist has photographic memory

By Jocelyn R. Uy

(First of a series)

I-TEAM *Report*
Fernando del Mundo
Chief

GABBY ATIENZA CAN DRAW a portrait in less than five minutes. He has a photographic memory, but he dreads attending parties and finds falling in love and telling jokes perplexing.

Even as a boy, Atienza knew that something was different about him. He started to understand what set him apart from others only five years ago after doctors diagnosed him with Asperger's Syndrome (AS), a form of "high-functioning autism."

The discovery was made after Atienza sought for the second time in his life help from a specialist in 2001. He had his first treatment after dropping out of the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna, in 1986 due to "complicated emotional stress."

People with AS—named after Austrian psychiatrist Hans Asperger—have normal intelligence and language development. But they are unable to grasp human emotions.

They have difficulties with changes so they are bound by repetitive behaviors. They also experience substantial delays in the development of their cognitive functions. But some are considered "gifted" when they manifest advanced abilities in language, reading, mathematics, spatial skills or music.

Autism has different levels of severity *(See In the Know below)*. Causes of this impairment remain shrouded in mystery despite more rapid advances in studies since Dr. Leo Kanner, a child psychiatrist at Johns Hopkins University Medical School, first used the word "autism" while doing his research in 1943.

Many children affected by autism experience problems of acceptance not only among peers but by society in general.

Over the past 11 years, "Autism Consciousness Week"—Jan. 14 to 21 this year—has been designated to raise awareness of a problem that the Autism Society of the Philippines says afflicts between 250,000 and 300,000 Filipinos.

ASP says the incidence of

AUTISTIC/ A4

These budding bakers may throw a tantrum

By Jocelyn R. Uy

WITH THEIR WHITE CAPS AND APRONS, the five boys kneading and cutting dough looked every inch like bakers in a French boulangerie, except that they throw occasional tantrums.

They were selected from a dozen students at the Center for Autism and Related Disorder, Philippines, and are undergoing training to man CARD's bakeshop that is set to open later this year in Las Piñas City.

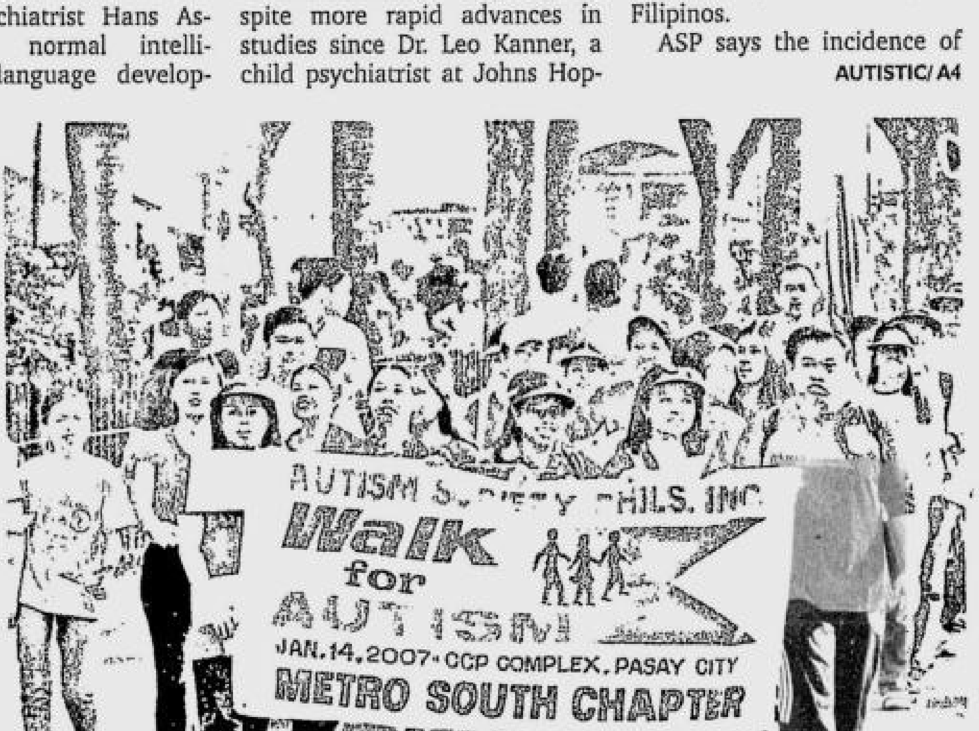
The *pan de sal* that will be produced will go to the poor children of Las Piñas.

Teaching these kids to become bakers may be a gamble, but officials of CARD, mostly parents of those afflicted with autism, believe that individuals with disabilities are capable of also serving others in need.

Starting out as a therapy center in Los Baños, Laguna, CARD was established in 1995 to provide a structured educational program and intervention for people with autism and their families.

It eventually moved to BF Homes in Las Piñas City as a school and a "one-stop-shop" center providing various programs on autism management so that it could reach out to more families in Metro Manila and nearby provinces. Forty-two students

THESE BUDDING/ A4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RYAN LIM

WALK FOR AUTISM. Members of different chapters of the Autism Society of the Philippines kick off Sunday Autism Consciousness Week, Jan. 14-21, at CCP complex.

IN THE KNOW

Autism has many faces, misconceptions

By Cyril L. Bonabente
Inquirer Research

THERE ARE MANY MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT autism. Some think all autistic individuals are mentally retarded, while others believe autistic people are geniuses who just happen to be oblivious to the people around them.

But autism is not so simple, as no two autistic persons are alike.

In fact, scientists have discovered that classic autism or autistic disorder is just one of five pervasive developmental disorders or PDDs

AUTISM/ A4

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northeastern Luzon will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers while Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with light rains while the rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/01/16/07 SOURCE PAGASA

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FrontPage

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Summit starts Asian healing

CEBU—WHEN LEADERS FROM CHINA, JAPAN AND South Korea sat around a table in the ballroom of an upmarket Philippine hotel here, it signaled more than just the start of yet another diplomatic pow-wow.

For analysts, it underscored the cautious revival of the relationship between East Asia's Big Three after years of rancor and missteps.

But the analysts warn there is still much to do to mend the past—and how the three countries get on will shape the region as it tackles problems from managing economic growth to North Korea's nuclear program.

"The relationship between the East Asian countries remains delicate," said Xu Jingbo, a researcher with the Japan Research Centre at Fudan University in China.

"Asean provided a stage for the three countries to have their summit," Xu said, referring to the weekend gathering here of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations where the leaders met.

"This is a good way to improve ties, with Asean serving as a buffer so that the three won't feel awkward about the tensions between them, because it's hard for them to have direct talks when they still have serious problems to deal with," Xu said.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, his Chinese counterpart Wen Jiabao and President Roh Moo-Hyun of South Korea met Sunday in Cebu on the sidelines of the Asean gathering for their first joint summit in two years.

Wen later described the meeting as "an improvement" on what had gone before and "beneficial for peace and stability in the East Asian region."

He arrived first as the host, followed by Roh and then Abe.

With Wen in the middle, they shook hands before each took one side of a three-cornered table.

The scene was in stark contrast to previous regional gatherings attended by Abe's predecessor, Junichiro Koizumi, when friction between Japan and China in particular cast a shadow over diplomatic efforts in East Asia.

Koizumi infuriated Japan's neighbors by repeatedly visiting the Yasukuni war shrine in Tokyo.

The Shinto shrine honors Japan's war dead, including World War II leaders condemned by the United States as top war criminals, and was seen by critics as a symbol of Japan's militarist past.

Yoshikazu Sakamoto, a professor emeritus of international politics at the University of Tokyo, said relations among Japan, China and South Korea have now only returned to where they were before Koizumi.

"What the three leaders have to do is to maintain top-level dialogues from now on," he told AFP. "However, relations remain fragile. It is still unclear if Abe is to visit Yasukuni while he is in office."

He said Japan's decision to upgrade its defense agency to a full ministry also put Beijing on edge. "China's distrust of Japan has remained unchanged," he said.

Fudan University's Xu, however, agreed that China and Japan were making an effort.

"China and Japan have adopted an attitude of improving relations and trying to relax tensions in East Asia," he said—and with Wen accepting an invitation to visit Japan, "I think the relationship of the two sides is progressive."

"But there are many problems as well, like the oil and gas dispute in the East China Sea and the regional security issue," Xu cautioned.

"Abe just finished a European trip in which he convinced the European Union not to lift its arms embargo on China. China won't be happy with that," he said.

Sakamoto also noted a different style between Japan and its neighbors on how to rein in North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Tokyo is taking a much firmer line against Pyongyang while Beijing and Seoul favor engagement.

Abe also has ramped up pressure on the emotional issue of the abduction of Japanese nationals by North Korean agents during the 1970s and '80s.

"Abe is unlikely to give in to North Korea over the issue \of abductions," Sakamoto said, "while China and South Korea want to give the nuclear issue top priority, which may isolate Japan during the six-way talks." *AFP*

NZ premier raises concern over human rights in RP

CEBU—NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTER Helen Clark said she had reiterated her concerns about human rights in the Philippines to President Macapagal-Arroyo at a regional summit of Southeast Asian chiefs and the leaders of China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia as well as New Zealand Ms Arroyo had hosted recently.

There has been a surge in political killings in the Philippines and Amnesty International has said that members of the security forces could be involved, an allegation Ms Arroyo has denied.

"The rate of extrajudicial killings is much higher in the past six months than it was in the whole previous year. So there is a set of issues that the Philippine government needs to be tackling very seriously," Clark said.

During the summit, a pledge by Asian countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions as part of a regional energy security pact was a welcome first step, even without concrete targets, Clark had said on Monday.

At the regional summit, the countries' leaders also cited environmental problems, along with high prices and the limited supply of oil as reasons to cut their dependency on crude.

"I am just thrilled to see that as a serious topic of discussion at a forum like the East Asia summit," Clark told Reuters in an interview at the 16 countries' second annual summit held on this Philippine resort island.

The countries, which include some of the worst polluters on earth, agreed to work towards freer trade in biofuel and reduce the costs of renewable and alternative energy sources but did not produce targets to cut emissions or a timetable for results. *Reuters*

Troops overrun Abu camp

By Dona Pazzibugan

GOVERNMENT TROOPS OVERRAN A MAjor Abu Sayyaf camp in Talipao, Sulu where the group was believed to be manufacturing bombs, the military said yesterday.

The Abu Sayyaf commander Abu Solaiman, who has a $5 million bounty on his head, was among those believed to have been wounded in the intense, three-hour gun battle.

The antiterrorist Task Force Comet in Sulu said troops from the Army's 8th Special Forces Company raided the kidnap gang's camp at Mount Dajo in Talipao yesterday morning.

Some 60 gang members believed to be under Abu Solaiman's command were in the camp.

With the advantage of surprise and overwhelming firepower, government troops overran the camp after an hour-long gun battle. This was followed by one-and-a-half hours of sporadic exchange of gunfire as soldiers chased the fleeing Abu Sayyaf, the task force said.

Casualties

One dead rebel was left behind as the Abu Sayyaf retreated, while an undetermined number were believed wounded, "among them probably Abu Solaiman," said the task force report.

Two soldiers suffered slight wounds.

"The troops overran the enemy encampment believed to be a bomb-making facility composed of 17 makeshift huts," the task force said in a report to the Camp Aguinaldo military headquarters.

Troops recovered bomb-making materials, including several improvised explosive devices, 17 blasting caps, six rounds of grenade launcher ammunition, one tester, two soldering iron, and assorted electronic materials believed to be used for explosives.

Task force leaders believe the troops may have preempted a plan by the Abu Sayyaf to bomb civilian targets in Sulu and other areas.

Troops also recovered a Magellan global positioning system (GPS), assorted medical paraphernalia, two combat shoes, five lower battledress attire (BDA) uniforms, two upper BDA uniforms and an M14 rifle telescopic guide.

They recovered "voluminous documents with high intelligence value."

The Armed Forces insist that United States troops in Sulu do not join combat operations against the Abu Sayyaf and the Indonesia-based Jemaah Islamiyah extremists linked to the al-Qaida international terror group, contrary to the claims of activists.

Activist sues ex-PDI columnist

By Tarra Quismundo

POLITICAL ACTIVIST RENATO CONSTANTINO Jr. yesterday filed criminal charges against former Philippine Daily Inquirer columnist Victor Agustin for "grave slander by deed and maltreatment by deed" after the two figured in an altercation during a media conference last month.

Describing Agustin's act as "analogous to being slapped in public by a woman," Constantino sought P5 million in damages from Agustin who doused him with cold water after the activist berated members of Congress holding a press conference on Charter change.

Agustin, who was suspended by the INQUIRER for one month due to the incident, could not be reached for comment.

INQUIRER publisher Isagani Yambot said Agustin, who was supposed to resume his business column "Cocktales" in the INQUIRER's Business section on Jan. 13, had yet to formally quit the paper.

However, Yambot said Agustin was already considered resigned as his column, carrying the copyrighted trademark "Cocktales" and "cocktail glasses" illustration, had already come out in the Manila Standard Today's Business section on Jan. 12 and 17.

"I e-mailed him twice and called him twice but he didn't answer," Yambot said.

Honasan seeks to file candidacy

DETAINED FORMER Senator Gregorio Honasan asked the court Tuesday to grant him prison leave to file his candidacy for midterm elections.

In a three-page motion, Honasan said he intends to run as an "independent" candidate for the Senate at May's polls, "and thus desires to personally file his certificate for candidacy" sometime between Jan. 29 and Feb. 2 at the Commission on Elections headquarters in Intramuros, Manila.

The motion filed by his lawyers at the Makati Regional Trial Court said Honasan, 58, would not object to any security measures the court may require if they grant his request.

The former rebel army colonel, captured last November after nine months on the run, was indicted in connection with the so-called Oakwood mutiny by about 300 junior officers in July 2003. He also faces charges, but has yet to be arraigned, over a failed coup in February 2006 which prompted Arroyo to declare a week-long state of emergency.

The Philippine National Police (PNP), his custodians at Camp Sto. Domingo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, said yesterday Honasan was free to run for a Senate seat. *Alcuin Papa*

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For more information on the above rates, please call SIA Reservations at 756-8888 (for airfares), SIA Tours Desk at 753-5151 to 52 or 756-8899 loc. 7001 (for packages), or your travel agent.

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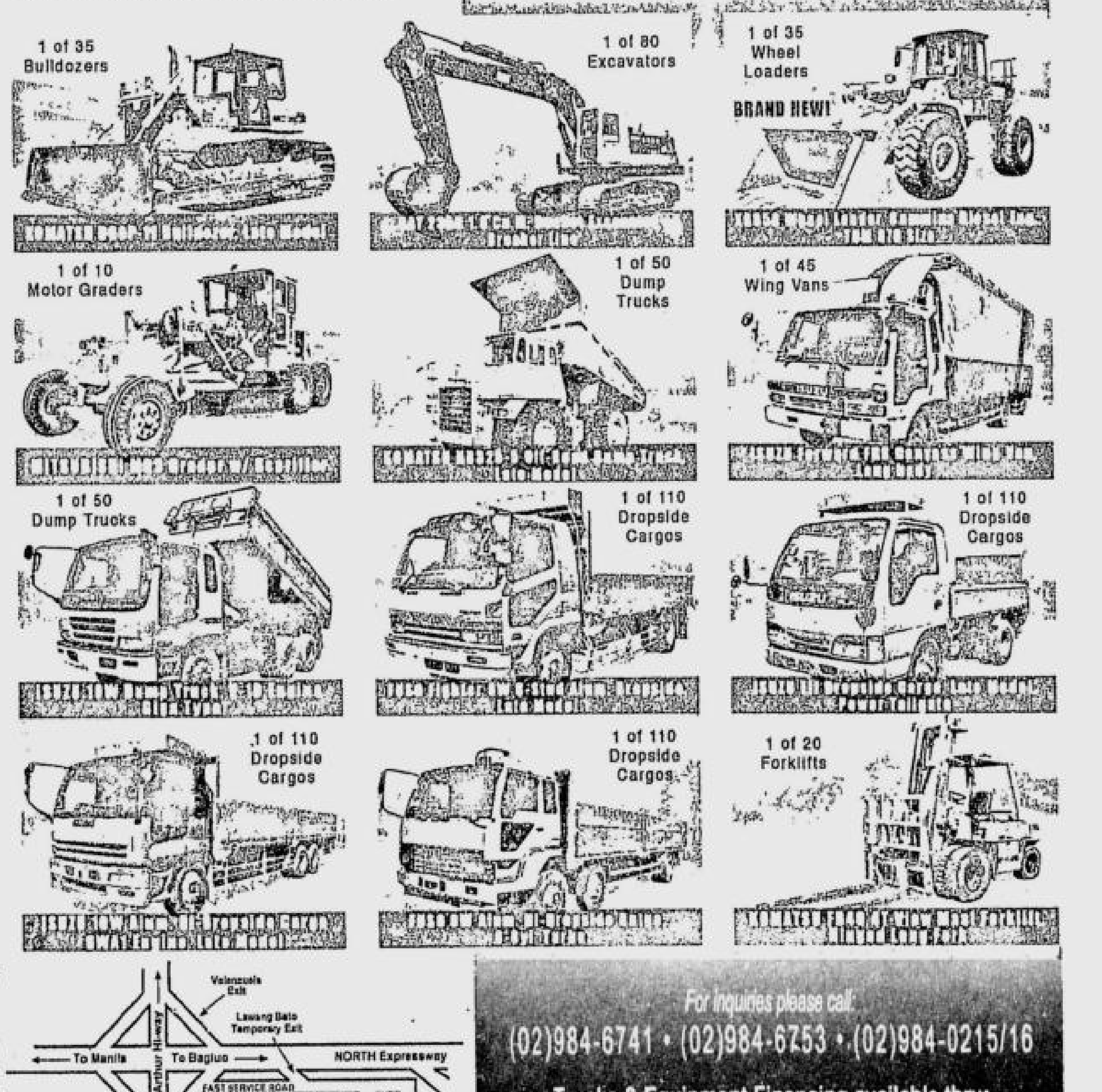

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Between 250,000 and 300,000 Filipinos afflicted

By DJ Yap

THE AUTISM SOCIETY OF THE Philippines (ASP) estimates that between 250,000 and 300,000 Filipinos today are afflicted with autism.

But of this figure, only 5 percent have been diagnosed, and only 2 percent have received medical attention, according to the nongovernment organization.

The rest of them go untreated, often becoming objects of ridicule or superstition. "In far-flung areas, people refer to autistic children as *'sinto-sinto,'* or *'nanuno sa punso,'*" says ASP executive director Ranilo Sorongon.

For some, it's plain ignorance or denial, but for most people, it's about the expense.

Major obstacle

The cost of diagnosing an autistic individual ranges from P1,200 to P10,000. Diagnosis by observing the individual is not enough. There are laboratory exams to undergo, such as hearing and electrocardiogram tests, Sorongon says.

In the Philippines, only about 35 to 40 clinicians are qualified to diagnose whether or not a person is autistic. Most of them are based in Metro Manila, a major obstacle for those living in the barrios, he adds.

After diagnosis, "intervention" begins.

Among the rich, a wide array of medical services is available, including occupational therapy and training by speech pathologists, special education teachers and even applied behavior specialists.

Facilities range from simple toys to dolphins for "play therapy" sessions. The services can cost upwards of P100,000 a month, especially for the most serious cases, says Sorongon.

"The tuition at private special education schools is high. At the low end, it's P40,000 a year. At the high end, it can reach P120,000 a year," he says.

Choices limited for the poor

Among the less affluent, the choices are more spartan.

"Poor parents of autistic children can go to the Philippine General Hospital. They have trained professionals there who can help," says Carmelita Almendrala, head of ASP's advocacy committee.

"They can also go to the Philippine Children's Medical Center. They can help in the diagnosis and will even refer you to free or cheap special education institutions," she says.

Sorongon says most public schools already have special education classes where autistic children can enroll, though these are often inadequate and overpopulated.

He also suggests knocking on the door of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office for financial assistance.

Sorongon admits that there is no direct program that assists parents of children with autism, particularly in meeting the financial requirements of intervention.

"For adolescents, we can make referrals for their possible employment," he says.

Nationwide ASP chapters

ASP has some 4,000 members in its database spread out over 26 chapters from Baguio to Zamboanga.

Most, or about 1,500 of them, are parents of autistic persons. The rest are doctors, special education teachers, occupational therapists, nurses and students, says Sorongon.

He estimates that about 60 percent of the members are active "in varying degrees."

"Some of them are involved in implementing our programs; others are in fund raising. A few start text brigades for our education campaigns," he says.

Membership is open to everyone, but it entails an annual fee "to sustain the organization," Sorongon says. Parents and professionals have to pay P300, students P200 and institutions P500 every year.

The programs and services at ASP include orientation and counseling services for families of newly diagnosed individuals with autism, a lending library and bookshop, a biennial newsletter, among other things.

Parents are blamed

Every month, ASP gathers parents of autistic children in a room for a "family support group sharing," a venue for them to air their frustrations and fears, joys and hopes.

During such gatherings, parents often tearfully recall hurtful words thrown at them because of their children's condition.

"People have a tendency to blame the parents. They say the mother was not careful enough, things like that," says Almendrala, a mother of four children, including 38-year-old Michael, who is autistic. "That really cannot be avoided."

But Almendrala says the ignorance of the public should not deter parents of autistic children from fighting for their acceptance by society.

"Because they live in society ... They have to go out. They have to go to church. They have to attend barangay assemblies. They have to go to school. They have to go to the mall," she says.

Magna Carta for the Disabled

"The worst thing for a parent to do is to isolate a child and withdraw him from the outside world. Instead of doing that, the parent should take pains to educate the community," Almendrala says.

This includes providing mechanisms for their integration into ordinary life, like the workplace, she says.

"We already have laws to help persons with disabilities," she says, citing the Magna Carta for the Disabled, which stipulates that 5 percent of employees in government offices should be reserved for persons with disabilities.

The same law gives tax relief to private businesses that employ differently-abled people, she adds.

"But the problem is, the law is not being implemented to the fullest," she says.

Parents in frontlines

To reverse the situation, parents, particularly mothers of autistic persons, find themselves at the front lines of a campaign to protect the rights of their children, Almendrala says.

"Organizations can't do everything for everybody but parents will be the ones to take up the slack. You advocate for your own child. Eventually, you start advocating for any child who's autistic," she says.

"In my case, I think of all autistic children as though they were my own."

Autism has many faces, misconceptions

From page A1

(also known as autism spectrum disorders) that are all characterized by impairment in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and play or behavior.

Scientists are not yet certain what causes PDDs, but some studies show that genes can be a factor. There is no cure, but symptoms can be remedied by therapies and behavioral interventions.

The US Department of Health and Human Services estimates that out of 1,000 children, two to six suffer from a PDD. *(Related story on Page A1.)*

The other PDDs are Asperger Syndrome, Rett Syndrome, childhood disintegrative disorder (CDD) and PDD not otherwise specified (PDD NOS). These are differentiated from each other by severity of impairment and prevalence of associated characteristics, says Dr. Alexis Reyes, head of the developmental pediatrics section of the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital.

Children with PDD have difficulty understanding cues like facial expressions and different voice tones, making it hard for them to empathize and communicate with other people. Some do not make eye contact, do not respond to their own names and/or speak much later than other kids their age. Those who can speak sometimes use idiosyncratic or repetitive language.

Because they have trouble expressing themselves, children with PDD may resort to throwing tantrums to get what they want. Some hurt themselves in frustration.

Abnormal sensitivity

However, many of them do not cry despite injuries because of reduced sensitivity to pain. On the other hand, some have abnormal sensitivity to sensory stimulation and will resist being cuddled even by their own parents.

A number of those with PDD cannot tolerate simple sounds like that of water dripping from a faucet. Reyes says some autistic individuals have reported that the pitter-patter of raindrops sounds like thunderclaps or gunshots to them.

It is also common for children with PDD to have an inflexible adherence to specific routines, like going to school in the same route every day.

Unusual activities like lining up objects and tearing up pieces of paper, lack of spontaneous play, and mannerisms like hand flapping are also symptoms of PDDs.

Not all these characteristics can be found in one child, however. The different manifestations of symptoms help doctors identify the type of PDD a child has. The commonly diagnosed PDD subcategories are classic autism, Asperger syndrome and PDD NOS.

Classic autism

- Most recognized because autistic kids display more of the common and severe symptoms than those afflicted with other PDDs.
- Accompanied by mental retardation 80 percent of the time.
- Four to five times more likely to affect males than females.

Asperger Syndrome

- The high-functioning end of the spectrum.
- Usually not diagnosed early (diagnosis for Asperger is commonly given at age seven or eight) because affected children may not have language impairment and may interact a little better than kids with other PDDs.
- Rarely associated with mental retardation.
- 10 to 15 times more common in boys than in girls.
- Should not be confused with savants (individuals who may not be that bright, but have extraordinary memories or special abilities in Mathematics, Art, Music or language).

PDD NOS

- Also known as atypical autism.
- Considered the middle phase (between classic autism and Asperger).
- Accompanied by mental retardation nearly 50 percent of the time.

Rett Syndrome

- Affects only girls and out of 10,000 only one gets this.
- Characterized by loss of communication skills, purposeful hand movements and walking abilities starting around age two
- Other symptoms: Stereotypical hand movements like hand wringing, sleep disturbances and seizures.
- Usually accompanied by severe mental retardation.
- Associated with breathing difficulties and sudden deaths.

Childhood disintegrative disorder

- The least common of the five PDDs; affects mostly males.
- Characterized by normal development, followed by manifestation of PDD characteristics between the ages of three and 10.
- Other symptoms: Loss of bladder and bowel control, seizures and a very low intelligence quotient.

Recent studies have discovered that diagnosis of children (usually two years or less) can still bring changes. "I had a patient who started out to be non-verbal when he was three. Now he is 13. He can communicate, and has been integrated in a regular class. His difficulties right now are more in dealing with social situations," Reyes says.

Other problems afflicting children are:

Attention deficit hyperactivity

- Characterized by pervasive and long-term inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity.
- Affects three to five percent of children.

Cerebral Palsy

- An incurable neurological disorder (usually inborn) that affects body movement and muscle coordination.
- Can result from brain damage, brain infections or head injury.

Down Syndrome

- An incurable set of mental and physical symptoms resulting from having an extra copy of chromosome 21. (One of 23 pairs of chromosomes in humans. Chromosomes are cellular components that contain genetic information.)
- Physical signs: Flat face with an upward slant to the eye, short neck, abnormally shaped ears, white spots on the iris, loose ligaments, deep creases in the palm of the hand.
- Other signs: Slow mental and motor development.

Dyslexia

- A life-long language processing disorder.
- Causes difficulties in reading, writing, spelling and/or speaking.
- Does not necessarily indicate low intelligence.

Autistic artist has photographic memory, shares talent

From page A1

autism is growing, but there is very little effort to help those stricken with the disorder, or to make them productive members of society.

A contribution to make

Atienza, now 46 years old, shows he has a contribution to make. His "splinter skill" is drawing cartoons, which he has been doing since he was 5. He shares his talent with children enrolled at the Center for Autism and Related Disorder (CARD) in Las Piñas City, where he works as an in-house artist.

CARD is a nonprofit organization run by Professionals for Autism Foundation Inc. in affiliation with the National Autistic Society of the United Kingdom and the Autism Society of the United States.

Rebecca Esguerra, a CARD founder and school director, says hiring Atienza helped her staff understand better the condition of children with autism as he could explain their difficulties well.

Unaware that he had AS, growing up and getting through his teenage years were difficult. Childhood left him with bad memories, Atienza says. He had a sinus operation at the age of 4 because he was "hearing and speech-impaired."

Persecuted in school

"I talked funny and that contributed to my persecution in school. My classmates kept calling me abnormal because I couldn't get myself to act like my classmates," Atienza says. He stutters and repeats phrases.

He could not figure out how to dribble or pass the basketball during Physical Education class. He tried to crack jokes but he always ended up being the butt of the joke that he told, Atienza says.

His was behavior was accented by the braces which his mother, an orthodontist, made him wear in high school. This gave his classmates more reasons to laugh at him, he recalls.

He was stiff at parties. He did not know how to mingle with other people. Instead of participating in class, he doodled, drawing "Popeye," his favorite cartoon character, or fighting soldiers from "Combat," an old TV war series he watched every Saturday night with his older brothers.

What also made him unusual was his photographic memory, Atienza says. He knew the schedule of every show on television. He even remembers them up to today, including prices of goods in the 1980s.

Saving the environment

After surviving high school, he entered college and took up Biology because "at that time I was thinking of saving the environment." He quit later after suffering an emotional breakdown. He attributes this to his fears of an "imminent civil war or collapse of our country" during the Ferdinand Marcos regime, the banning of his favorite Japanese animated series, Voltes V and the death of his father in 1984.

"When I dropped out of school, I went into a lot of violent fits. I hammered my fists into walls because I could not find anyone or anything to blame. I was at the point of self-destruction," he says.

Fine Arts

However, it was in his drawings that he found coherence in his state of confusion. To cushion his depression, Atienza decided to create his own Japanese-inspired comic book "Deputy Dodgers," which CARD is helping him publish.

After his two-year psychiatric treatment, he enrolled at the University of the East and later transferred to Philippine Women's University to study Fine Arts. He also attended a summer art workshop in the College of Fine Arts at the University of the Philippines.

In 1987, Atienza was hired as a sales assistant at a computer shop in Makati City. His daily grind involved collecting checks, photocopying and delivering products to clients.

He was dismissed after 14 years, which triggered another breakdown. He then consulted medical experts who diagnosed his Asperger's Syndrome. This put an end to his many questions—why he was bullied in school and branded as "abnormal" by others.

'My life as a comic book'

"I was able to piece together why those things happened to me. Though I can't correct those instances, [I was able] to make peace with myself. Although I am already an adult, it is never too late to restart my life," Atienza says.

He may never learn the things that come naturally to ordinary people, like being romantic, driving backward or going home after dark. But he is happy with what he can do now that not many people can.

He gives art lessons to children at CARD, draws caricatures for parents and guests on special occasions and speaks at events organized by the Autism Society and other institutions for people with disabilities.

He is also finishing his graphic autobiography titled "My Life as a Comic Book" to propagate awareness of autism.

"I want to give them (people with autism) hope and the assurance that they are not alone and they are entitled to a future. But family members must understand their special needs so that they would be able to deal with them better," Atienza says. *With a report from DJ Yap*

These budding bakers may ...

From page A1

are currently enrolled.

'All Dough' shop

Now, the school is working to set up a bakeshop called "All Dough" this year, which will mainly provide community-based supported employment for their students and at the same time help poor communities in the neighborhood.

"People think that these children have their own worlds. But they are not hallucinating about having a different world. Our reality and theirs are the same, they just don't know what to do with it," says school director Rebecca Esguerra, who also has a son with autism.

The baking program is part of CARD's project called "Enabling and Empowering Persons with Autism through Employment," which has won the World Bank-sponsored "Panibagong Paraan" grant through the Philippine-Australia Community Assistance Program (Pacap) last year.

P1-million grant

The school will use the P1-million grant to bankroll the entire program. Pacap will also provide funds and equipment for the bakeshop and the multipurpose hall, which will be constructed inside the school, Esguerra says.

The Catholic Women's Club, an 85-year-old charity institution which has been supporting the school's vocational training and scholarship programs, will also lend a hand in building the training facility and give some of the *pan de sal* to schools with feeding programs.

In this way, Esguerra says, poor students will get an extra source of food to get through their school days.

The center will train at least 12 of its students in *pan de sal*-making, handling and packing based on a curriculum founded on a functional, integrated and team-approach model.

They will be assisted by their caregivers, or *yayas*, who also have been trained by the center.

Partnership with home

"The very important aspect of our intervention is our partnership with the home. When a child is enrolled with us, we are enrolling a whole family. We train the parents, siblings and their *yayas*," she explains.

Dulce Anastacio, CARD executive director whose 19-year-old son is among the five students in the cooking class, says it is enough to see him occupied with a chore that teaches him to be independent.

"I don't expect him to go to college," Anastacio says. "I would just like him to be functional and for him to maximize the limited potentials that he has."

And the bakeshop will be the right place for his son, she says.

"We envision a place where potentials of individuals with autism will be tapped to enable them to serve and be productive members of society," says Esguerra.

Naia to collect ...

From page A1

P200 fee on top of the P550 terminal fee, for a total of P750 in departure fees at Naia Terminals 1 and 2.

Alfonso Cusi, general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa), said passengers would receive one receipt for both fees and would only be allowed to pay in pesos.

Aside from the terminal and security fees, Filipino travelers will be required to pay the P1,680 travel tax at the Naia if the fee had not been included in their airline tickets.

The security fee is expected to generate some P700 million annually and is intended to enhance security at the Naia terminals in light of the continued global terror threat.

The airport authority said it would use the funds to upgrade the current security equipment being used at the Naia, such as walk-through and baggage X-rays.

The security fee should have been imposed on Monday, Cusi said, but the airlines were not able to incorporate the P200 in the passengers' airline tickets.

Airlines wary

The airlines were apprehensive about the setup because of the additional administrative work and extra cost on their part.

"They (airlines) could not resolve how to handle the collection and accounting because of the OFW exemption," Cusi said.

So the airport authority decided to go ahead and collect the security fee even without the airlines' official response to Miaa's request.

Lafayette mines looking to resume operations

SYDNEY—LAFAYETTE MINING LTD. SAID on Tuesday it was confident of a rapid resumption of copper and zinc concentrate shipments once repairs are completed at its mine in the Philippines, damaged by a typhoon late last year.

In the meantime, existing inventories of concentrate—ground ore—were being shipped on spot terms by South Korea's LG International, said Lafayette, whose stock is listed on the Australian Stock Exchange.

In late November, Typhoon Durian ("Reming") ripped across remote Rapu-Rapu island, in Albay, knocking out power and communication lines in the mainland and damaging staff housing quarters.

"The base metals plant and ancillary infrastructure required for the restart of production of copper and zinc concentrates are expected to be available in early February 2007," Lafayette said in a statement.

The typhoon struck as the company was testing operations on a trial basis following two cyanide spills in October 2005 that led to a suspension of mining by the Philippine government.

Before the suspension, Lafayette had been forecast to generate revenues of $350 million a year from production of 10,000 tons of copper in concentrate, 14,000 tons of zinc, 50,000 ounces of gold and 600,000 ounces of silver.

Rapu-Rapu was the first foreign-owned mine to open after the Philippine Supreme Court upheld a law allowing 100-percent foreign ownership of mining projects.

Lafayette shares were trading up 1.1 percent at 8.9 cents by early afternoon in a slightly firmer overall market. *Reuters*

Baguio writers name 16 fellows

THE BAGUIO WRITERS GROUP (BWG) HAS announced the 16 fellows selected for its first writing workshop for the year scheduled Jan. 20 and 27, 2-5 p.m., at Grandma's Workshop at the mezzanine of Porta Vaga Bldg., Session Road, Baguio City.

The fellows are Freda Dao-ines, Corazon Patricio, Junley Lazaga, Zaida Angelita Lazaro, Sacha Garah Weygan, Abigail Dayawen, Yohan Ocampo, Learcival Baniqued, Chelsea Raye Tade, Winona Rei Bolislis, Janice Bagawi, Rachel Pitlongay, Rolando Refuerzo, Evita Lynn Ongchangco, Moncheri Malenab and Ybottee Corinn Garcia.

The BWG acknowledged the following for offering scholarships to some of the fellows: Gilda Cordero-Fernando, Lorna Kalaw Tirol, Rita Ledesma, Karina Bolasco, Mariel Francisco and Edna Manlapaz of the First Draft group of writers; Professors Delfin Tolentino Jr., Victoria Costina and Nela Florendo of the University of the Philippines Baguio; and the UP Sineklab.

The workshop teaching staff is made up of Francis Macansantos, Jennifer Patricia Carino, Padma Perez and Babeth Lolarga.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, January 17, 2007
2nd Week in Ordinary Time
Anthony Abbot

1st Reading: Heb 7:1-3, 15-17
Gospel: Mark 3:1-6

Again Jesus entered the synagogue. A man who had a paralyzed hand was there and some people watched Jesus: Would he heal the man on the Sabbath? If he did they could accuse him.

Jesus said to the man with the paralyzed hand, "Stand here in the center." Then he asked them, "What does the Law allow us to do on the Sabbath? To do good or to do harm? To save life or to kill?" But they were silent.

Then Jesus looked around at them with anger and deep sadness because they had closed their minds. And he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out and his hand was healed. But as soon as the Pharisees left, they met with Herod's supporters, looking for a way to destroy Jesus.

Commentary

Melchizedek, king of justice and king of peace, was a priest, an image of the Son of God who is priest forever. Jesus and those who are priests in his company are made so 'in virtue of a power of a life which cannot be destroyed' by any law. Jesus is priest-one who is handed over to God-and his priesthood begins with both healing what is shriveled and confronting with the truth. This is the worship that God wants on the Sabbath and everyday. Jesus is watched and he confounds them with his goodness and integrity. But they grieve him with their hardness of heart, their callousness and shriveled sense of God. They plot to kill him. And what about us-if we have been healed, do we worship truly or do we grieve God still with our actions?

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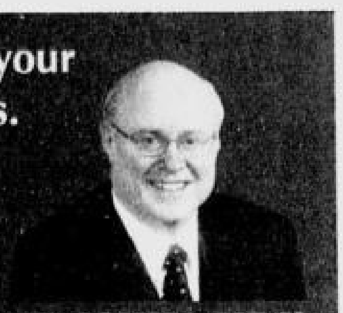

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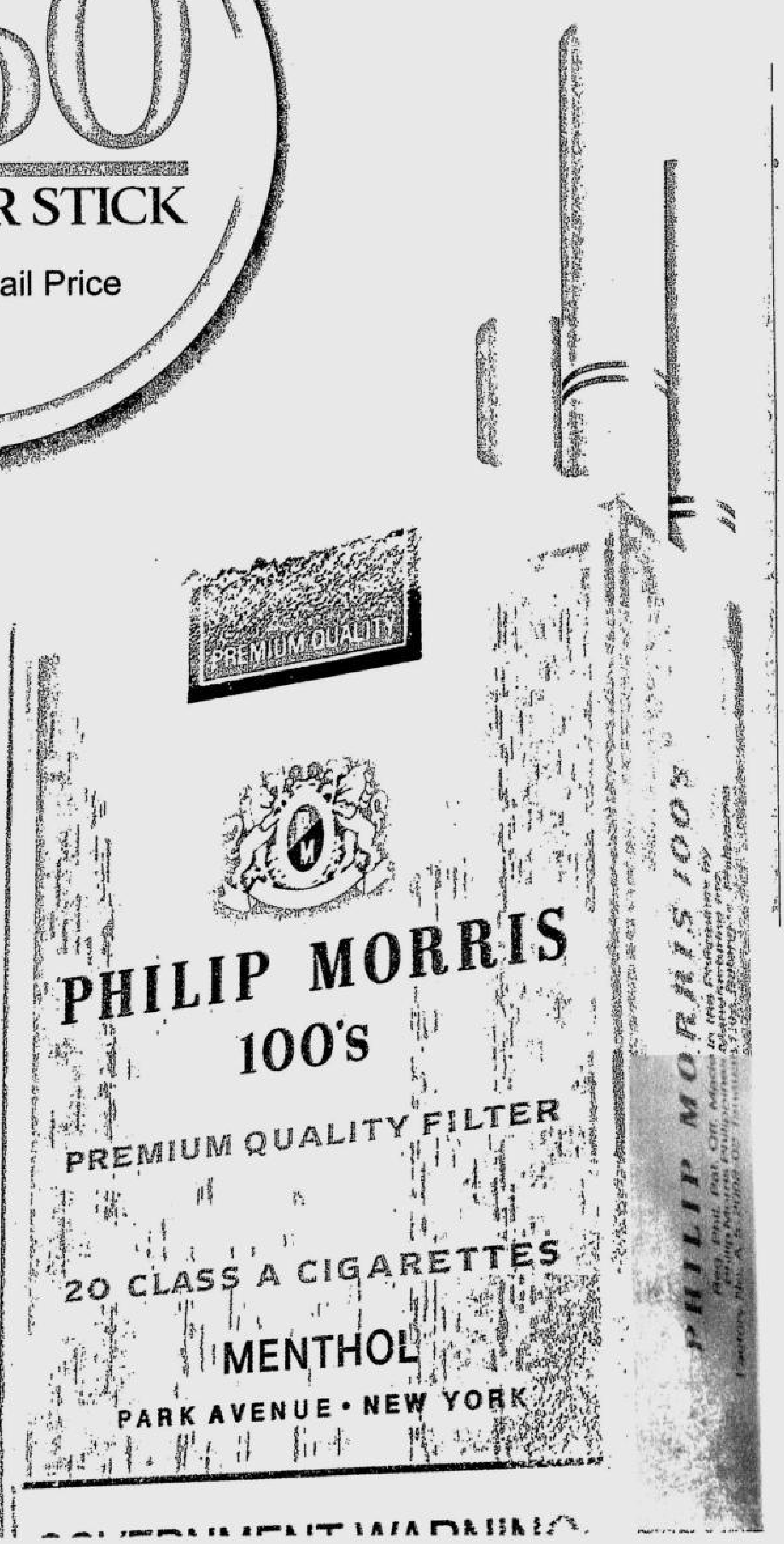

Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

'Babel' and 'Dreamgirls' bag Golden Globe awards

From page A1

zalez Inarritu of Mexico after California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, on crutches, presented the best drama prize for the sweeping ensemble drama made across three continents (Africa, North America and Asia) and in five languages.

"It seems that no matter how many languages you make a film in, I think the power of cinema is universal and at the end emotion doesn't need translation, and that's the beauty of it," said Inarritu, who had earlier said inspiration for the film came from his experiences of living in America in the aftermath of 9/11.

"Dreamgirls," which follows the rise of three women singers and closely resembles the ascendancy of all-girl groups like The Supremes, won three awards. The bounty—trophies for best musical or comedy, as well as best supporting actor and actress for Eddie Murphy and Jennifer Hudson, respectively—was more than any other film received.

Hudson fought back tears in accepting her award. She rose to fame barely two years ago on the TV singing competition "American Idol" on the strength of her powerhouse voice.

"Oh, my God. Thank you so much," she said. "Wow. I have always dreamed but never, ever, this big. This goes far beyond anything I could ever have imagined."

The Golden Globe awards, organized and voted on by roughly 85 members of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, are Hollywood's second-biggest film honors and are something of a dress rehearsal for the Oscars.

Elizabeth I and II

In the acting categories, British veteran Helen Mirren scored a notable double, winning two Globes for her portrayal of Queens Elizabeth I and Elizabeth II in separate productions.

Mirren is considered the overwhelming favorite for best actress at the Oscars for playing Elizabeth II in "The Queen," a fictionalized account of life in the royal household following the 1997 death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Mirren dedicated her award to the British monarch. She noted that at the age of 25 in 1952, "a woman called Elizabeth Windsor walked into literally the role of a lifetime, and I honestly feel this award belongs to her because I think you fell in love with her, not with me."

The best actor in a drama role award went as expected to Forest Whitaker, beating stiff challenges from Peter O'Toole and Leonardo DiCaprio with his portrayal of Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in "The Last King of Scotland."

'Borat'

The biggest laughs of the night came from British comedian Sacha Baron Cohen, winner of the best comedy actor award for his film, "Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan."

In the spoof documentary and box-office hit, Cohen plays a blundering Kazakh journalist traveling through the US heartland in search of cultural enlightenment.

"Borat" has courted controversy, with some participants taking legal action claiming they were duped into appearing.

It is also notable [illegible] some hair-raising nude wrestling scenes between Cohen and [illegible] costar Ken Davitian.

"This movie was a life-changing experience," Cohen said in his characteristically dry manner. "I saw some dark sides of America. I refer to the anus and testicles of my costar Ken Davitian."

Screen legends

"Ken, when I was in that scene and I stared down and saw your two wrinkled golden globes on my chin, I thought to myself, 'I better win a bloody award for this,'" he added.

Other winners included screen legends Meryl Streep and Clint Eastwood, whose war epic "Letters from Iwo Jima" won the best foreign language film prize.

Streep, 57, won the sixth Globe of her career for her portrayal of an icy fashion magazine editor in the hit comedy "The Devil Wears Prada."

"I think I've worked with everybody in the room!" she said. "It makes you want to cry with gratitude. Until next year."

Eastwood praised actor Ken Watanabe for his performance in "Letters from Iwo Jima," which was made in Japanese and is one of back-to-back films shot by the director about the battle for Iwo Jima in World War II.

"You don't know what this does for my confidence," quipped Eastwood, whose film is not eligible for the foreign language prize at the Oscars but is considered a possible contender in the best movie category.

Warren Beatty received the Cecil B. DeMille Award for lifetime achievement.

"The truth is, I haven't made an awful lot of movies," Beatty said, joking about the busy schedules of other older actors and filmmakers such as Eastwood and Jack Nicholson. "Something like this is enough for a guy to go out and make another movie."

Also taking home a film award was Peter Morgan, who won for best screenplay for "The Queen."

The talking-auto comedy "Cars" was named best animated film.

"The Song of the Heart" (from "Happy Feet") was named best original song in a film, and Alexandre Desplat won for best movie score for "The Painted Veil."

The TV winners included Kyra Sedgwick for best dramatic actress in "The Closer," Britain's Hugh Laurie for dramatic actor in "House," and Alec Baldwin for musical or comedy actor in "30 Rock."

"Grey's Anatomy" won for best TV drama series.

"Ugly Betty," which originated as a Colombian *telenovela*, won the prize for TV musical or comedy series over such better-known shows as "Desperate Housewives" and "The Office."

"Ugly Betty" star Angel Ferrera won for best actress in a TV musical or comedy series. *Reports from Reuters, AP, AFP*

2 winners have distinct ties with the Philippines

From page A1

ipino woman named Stella and lived with her in the Philippines until his death.

Peter Mirren, an engineer, lived in the Philippines for many years, according to Helen Mirren's husband, Taylor Hackford, the award-winning director of "Ray."

"He loved the Philippines," the actress told the INQUIRER on the red carpet at the Beverly Hilton hotel Monday night.

She said her brother's widow and their adopted Filipino daughter were now living in the United Kingdom.

Martial arts

Forest Whitaker, who was voted best actor for his role as Idi Amin, the late dictator of Uganda, studies Philippine martial arts under the supervision of Filipino-American masters in Los Angeles.

Whitaker had earlier told the INQUIRER that he had fond memories of the Philippines while filming "Platoon" in the country, and that he bonded with some young students in Manila who were involved in the film production.

At the height of the 1986 Edsa Revolt, these Filipino friends offered him refuge in a house in Balic-Balic, Manila, Whitaker said.

He said he felt safer staying in that house instead of a hotel.

On the red carpet at the Golden Globes, Whitaker said, "Let's hope so," when asked about the possibility of winning the trophy for his friends in Manila.

He was visibly moved and almost at a loss for words when he did win later.

Would love to visit

Sacha Baron Cohen, best actor winner in a film musical or comedy (for "Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan"), gave the most hilarious acceptance speech following his win.

Clutching his trophy at the 20th Century Fox after-party (Read more about the red carpet and after-party action in Inquirer Entertainment), Cohen remembered that this reporter was from the Philippines.

He said he had recently vacationed in Thailand, "which is close to the Philippines," and added that he would love to visit the country someday.

Sharing her victory

Jennifer Hudson, who bowed out of the third season of "American Idol" earlier than Filipino-American Jasmine Trias, won the best supporting actress award for her first film role, Effie, in "Dreamgirls."

Hudson's powerful rendition of the ballad "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going" in the movie fueled her chances of winning.

At Paramount/DreamWorks' after-party celebrating its harvest of two best picture awards (for "Babel" and "Dreamgirls"), Hudson said she was sharing her victory with Trias, Fantasia Barrino (who was also considered for Effie), and the other finalists of AI-3.

Hudson also said Trias called her to wish her success before "Dreamgirls" began its release in the United States.

AI judge Simon Cowell, who had once told Hudson that she was "out of her league," has not spoken with her since the movie's success.

But he taped a message of congratulations to Hudson in a "Dreamgirls"-themed episode of "Oprah."

Sundries

Clint Eastwood's "Letters from Iwo Jima," which was filmed in Japanese, ran away with the best foreign language film. But another member of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association said the Philippines' "The Blossoming of Maximo Oliveros," which was submitted for consideration, was in his top list of nominees.

In the Golden Globes TV category, Emily Blunt bagged the best supporting actress award for "Gideon's Daughter."

Blunt, who was also nominated as best supporting actress in the film category for her role as Meryl Streep's assistant in "The Devil Wears Prada," arrived with her boyfriend, singer Michael Buble.

According to Blunt, she is aware that Buble is popular in the Philippines and that he has performed a number of times in Manila.

On the red carpet, Buble told us: "Shall I say 'Mabuhay'?"

Vanity thy name is man: Plastic surgery going up

From page A1

of physical hang-ups.

With procedures for droopy eyelids, bulging "love handles" and oversized breasts, more men are readjusting their bodies to enhance their looks and stack the odds in their favor career-wise.

"It's much more acceptable in society today for men to seek plastic surgery," said Dr. Phillip Haeck, a plastic surgeon in the western state of Washington.

19% increase

"There is an incredible push for men to smell good, to have smoother skin and coincidentally to pay more attention to how they look," said Haeck, 53, who underwent surgery on his eyelids two years ago and who has seen a 19-percent increase in male clients in the last five years.

According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, the total number of cosmetic procedures on men grew by 16 percent between 2000 and 2005 with breast reduction, tummy tuck, lip augmentation, eyelid surgery and liposuction among the most popular procedures.

Breast reduction surgery, for example, increased by 17 percent between 2004 and 2005 and liposuction by 10 percent. Tummy tuck surgeries grew by 37 percent between 2004 and 2005 and by 156 percent between 2000 and 2005, while lip augmentation jumped by 61 percent between 2004 and 2005 and by 458 percent between 2000 and 2005.

Tom, 51, of Philadelphia, said he decided last December to confront his lifelong hang-up about his large breasts by undergoing surgery, and he has not looked back since.

Ton of bricks lifted

"It's like a ton of bricks lifted," said Tom, a construction supervisor who did not want his last name used and who paid $4,000 for the procedure.

"It was such a psychological relief to have this done. I went out of the house for the first time this week with just a T-shirt on," he added.

"When I was growing up, I would never take my shirt off anywhere and when I got married and had kids, I never went to the beach or learned to swim because of that."

Dr. Mark Solomon, a plastic surgeon in the eastern state of Pennsylvania, believes the baby boomer generation is behind men seeking "six-pack abs" and youthful looks beyond their 40s, 50s and even 60s.

"Competition for jobs continues to increase at an intense pace with people trying to maintain their level of advancement both professionally and personally, and more people are divorced than ever before," Solomon said. "People are also less concerned today about appearing feminine."

He said his male patients, who make up 30 percent of his clientele, would span all age groups and backgrounds—from mailmen to prison guards and executives willing to spend from $2,000 to $10,000, depending on the surgery.

Eyelid surgery typically runs between $3,000 and $4,000 and breast surgery about $5,000. Most of the surgeries are out-patient and require a brief recovery period.

"With regard to facial surgery, most of them want to get rid of the tired look," Solomon said of his patients.

"For body contouring, they've dieted and exercised and still can't make their body look the way they want it to."

Haeck said some of his older patients would seek a nip and tuck in a desperate bid to keep up with their younger counterparts at the office. *AFP*

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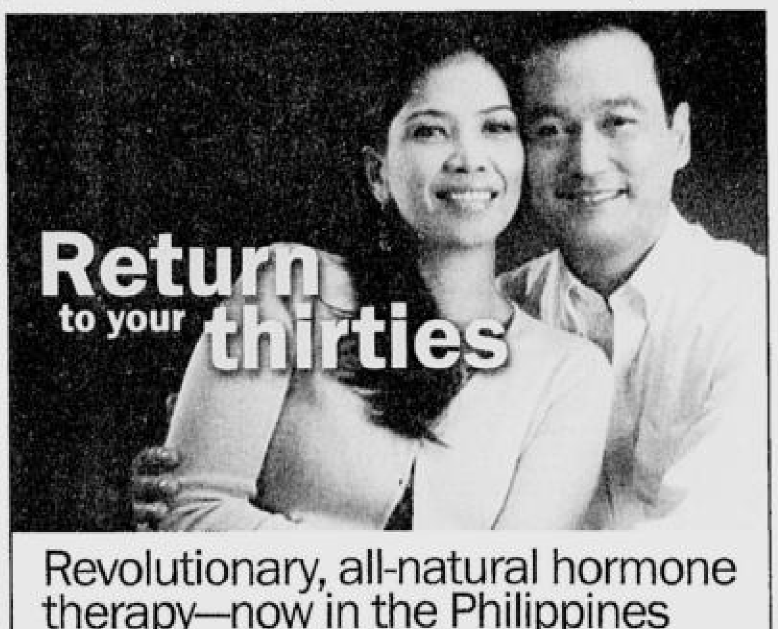

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Plane crashes off Subic, 2 hurt

A PILOT AND HIS Malaysian student survived after their light aircraft ditched into the sea by the Subic Bay International Airport yesterday afternoon.

Pilot Emil Mananhaya and the student, identified by the Associated Press as Ng Soong Sen, 35, "were able to swim out of the water area and (were) already given medical attention," probers said. They suffered cuts and bruises.

Probers said that Fliteline Aviation's Cessna C-150 took off from the airport at 1:48 pm for a local flight.

Ten minutes later, however, the aircraft ditched a kilometer away from the threshold of Runway 07.

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- CREDIT AND COLLECTION MANAGEMENT
  January 22 - February 2, 2007 M-W-F 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- CORPORATE PLANNING
  January 22 - February 2, 2007 M-W-F 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE TRAINERS
  January 23 - February 6, 2007 T-TH 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
- EFFECTIVE BUSINESS WRITING
  January 23 - February 6, 2007 T-TH 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
- LAW FOR NON-LAWYERS
  January 23 - February 6, 2007 T-TH 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
- ACCOUNTING FOR NON-ACCOUNTANTS
  January 20 - February 17, 2007 Saturday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
- EFFECTIVE PEST MANAGEMENT
  January 20 and 27, 2007 Saturday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
- HANDLING COMPLAINTS AND DIFFICULT CUSTOMERS
  January 20 and 27, 2007 Saturday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
- ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING FOR MANAGERS & SUPERVISORS
  January 20, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- HUMAN RELATIONS
  January 20, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- TIME AND PRIORITY MANAGEMENT
  January 20, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- FRAUD: CAN YOU DETECT ONE?
  January 27, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- GRIEVANCE HANDLING
  January 27, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- HOW TO DELEGATE WORK & ENSURE IT'S DONE RIGHT
  January 27, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- HOW TO START, FINANCE AND MANAGE A BUSINESS
  January 21 - February 11, 2007 Saturday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
- EXPORT BUSINESS
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- MANAGERIAL ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL CONTROL
  January 21 - February 11, 2007 Saturday 9:00 AM - 12:00 NN
- CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT
  January 21 - February 4, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT
  January 21 - February 4, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- SITE DEVELOPMENT AND MASS HOUSING
  January 21 - February 4, 2007 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM
  January 24, 2007 Wednesday 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- PLANNING, DIRECTING AND CONTROLLING THE WORK
  January 22, 2007 Monday 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
- EXPORT COSTING, PRICING & CAPITAL COMPUTATION
  January 28, 2007 Sunday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- COST SAVINGS & WASTE PREVENTION IN PRODUCTION
  January 28, 2007 Sunday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- FINANCIAL ANALYSIS FOR NON-FINANCIAL MGRS.
  January 28, 2007 Sunday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- MOTIVATION: KEY TO WINNING
  January 26, 2007 Friday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
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  January 21, 2007 Sunday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- AVOIDING PITFALLS IN FINANCING
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DEPARTMENT ORDER NO. 38-06

17 November 2006

SUBJECT : SUSPENSION OF EFFECTIVITY OF DEPARTMENT ORDER Nos. 35-05 AND 36-05

TO : All Internal Revenue Officers and Others Concerned

In view of the numerous requests for the review of the zonal values prescribed in the province of Pampanga and to allow time to determine whether or not to conduct review, the effectivity of Department Order Nos. 35-05 and 36-05 is hereby suspended until further notice.

MARGARITO B. TEVES
Secretary of Finance

Recommended by:

JOSE MARIO C. BUÑAG
Commissioner of Internal Revenue

(PDI - Jan 17, 2007)

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FOR ABSENTEE VOTERS

Voting via Internet OKd

By Jerome Aning

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS has approved voting via Internet for the 26,000 overseas absentee voters in Singapore.

Sitting en banc, the poll body yesterday gave the go-ahead for Commissioner Florentino Tuason Jr., chair of the overseas absentee voting committee, to enter into a contract with a suitable company to conduct the Internet voting.

Tuason said the contract would be awarded to the Spanish-based information technology firm Scytl, which would provide a secure, exclusive and patented software for the Internet voting.

"Scytl has been doing this for the last 10 years. The technology has been used in Spain, Australia, some parts of Europe and the United States, and the results were fantastic," Tuason told reporters.

No bidding was necessary as the project would cost only P23.5 million, which comes to about P900 for each voter, he said.

"We got clearance from the Office of the Solicitor General that we can dispense with the bidding," he said.

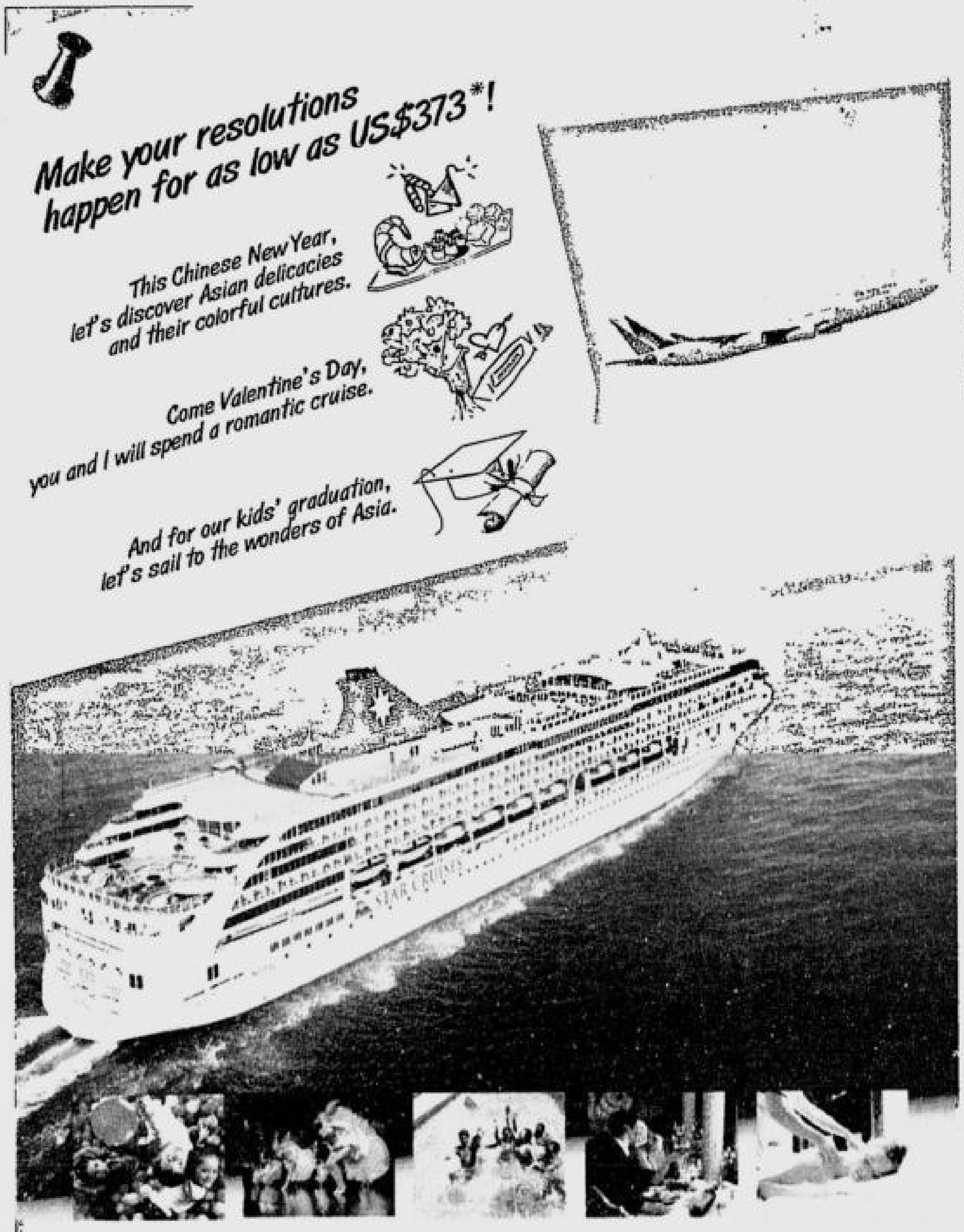
As soon as the Comelec receives the letter of intent from Scytl, the firm would be given the project in accordance with an expedited procurement process allowable by law, Tuason explained.

He said Singapore was chosen as the pilot site for the Internet voting as many of the households and offices there where Filipinos live and work have Internet access and that the Filipino communities there are more compact.

The voter would only need to log into the Internet, access a website to be set up by Scytl, enter his voter number and password, click the online ballot and check his choice of senator and party-list group. Once he finishes and logs off, his vote is automatically canvassed.

Tuason said he hoped the Internet voting would be a success so it can be used for all overseas absentee voting in 2010. There are around 501,000 overseas absentee voters.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said that overseas absentee voters would be able to vote in most places around the world. These include the United States, Canada, all European countries except Greece, Australia and all states and territories under the consular jurisdiction of Philippine embassies in nearby countries.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Palace lists 8 on Senate slate

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION has so far firmed up the candidacy of eight people for its senatorial slate in the May polls.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor and Bukidnon Rep. Miguel Zubiri are among the eight in the final list of the administration's senatorial lineup, two of whom are women.

Presidential political adviser Gabriel Claudio said the administration was not disclosing its slate for now, but described the final eight candidates to be a mix of "experience, youth and representation."

Claudio said in a phone interview that the candidates had "intra-ticket" approval.

Zubiri, a member of Lakas, is expected to show up in Malacañang today to witness President Macapagal-Arroyo as she signs into law the Biofuels Act, which is his pet project.

Unlike the opposition, the administration was deliberately keeping quiet the composition of its senatorial lineup, as it continues to build a "winnable" slate in the May polls.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said there were more than 12 "well-known" people being considered in the administration slate.

But Ermita said President Macapagal-Arroyo, being the titular head of the ruling coalition, would have the final say on the administration's senatorial slate.

Claudio said the administration was busy building a "team" that can work together in the polls.

This was unlike the opposition whom Claudio said the veracity of its senatorial lineup based on its recent pronouncements had been "tentative, shifting and insecure."

Unperturbed by the opposition's seeming ease in forming its senatorial ticket, Ermita said the administration was carefully determining who will make up its senatorial slate that will run under a coalition with the ruling Lakas party and other political parties.

He said the ruling party was consulting with other allied political parties in choosing their common candidates in the senatorial race.

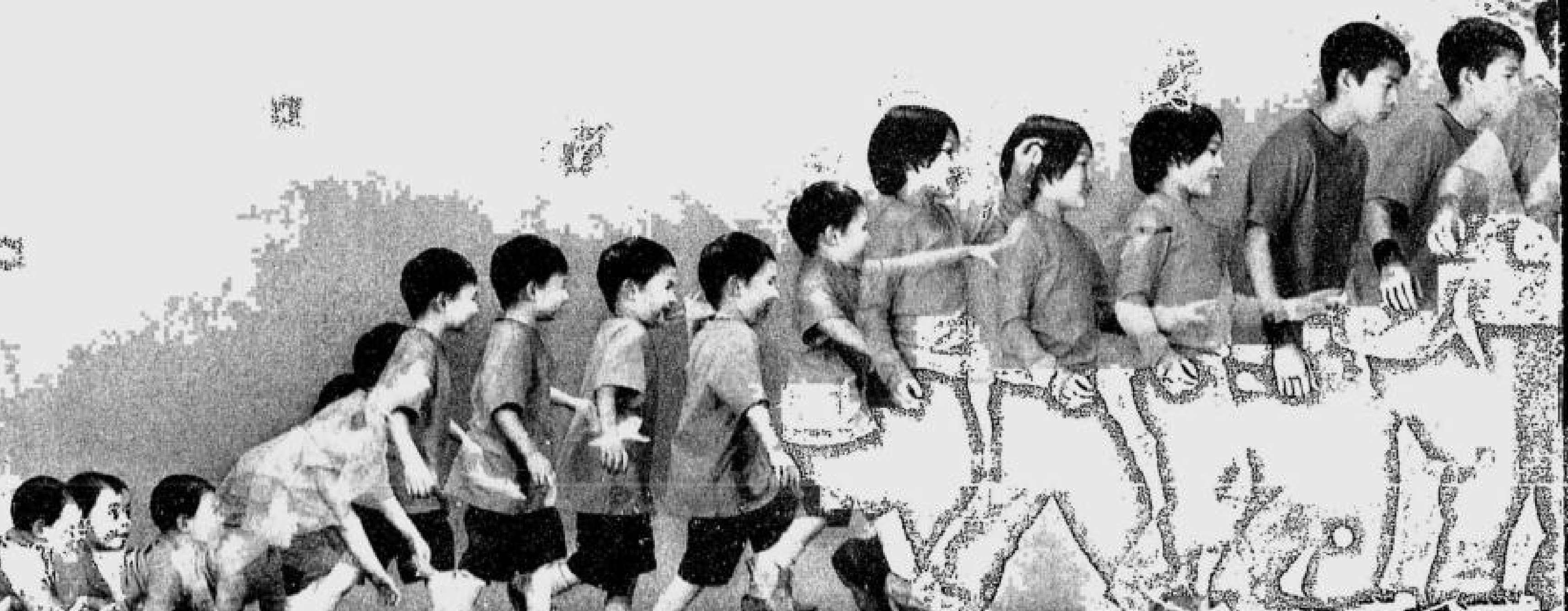
"We have a political alliance ... we have to consult with the leaders because if you don't ... we might have some misunderstanding and then end up losing the alliance," he said.

Aside from Lakas, Ermita said the coalition for this mid-term polls would include the Liberal Party (wing of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza), Kampi, the Nationalist People's Coalition, Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas and the Nationalista Party.

What was certain in this election though was that those running under the administration coalition would have an edge over the others, Ermita told reporters.

"Anyone running under the administration would have an advantage," Ermita said. "Remember this is a mid-year election," he said, as he noted that the focus of the administration would be mainly on its candidates and their victory.

Ermita also said that another thing to consider in this election was the "pulling power" of President Arroyo.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Jinggoy protests Davide posting as envoy to UN

OPPOSITION SEN. JINGGOY Estrada said yesterday he would ask the United Nations to reject the "illegal" appointment of former Chief Justice Hilario Davide as the country's permanent ambassador to the world body.

Davide's oath-taking before President Macapagal-Arroyo on the sidelines of the 12th Asean Summit in Cebu last Sunday ahead of his confirmation by the bicameral Commission on Appointments has drawn criticism from allies of former President Joseph Estrada.

Estrada, son of the former leader, said he would send a communication to the UN headquarters in New York to reject Davide's appointment, arguing that his oath-taking disregarded Congress and the rule of law.

Davide, 71, appeared before the commission before Congress adjourned for the holidays, but the young Estrada moved to further question him at the resumption of sessions this year mainly on his role on the swearing in of Ms Arroyo after the elder Estrada's downfall.

He was deemed bypassed. He is set to succeed Ambassador Lauro Baja who has held the post since May 2003.

But the head of the House contingent to the commission said Davide's appointment was not improper since it was in the nature of an interim appointment which the President can make while Congress is in recess.

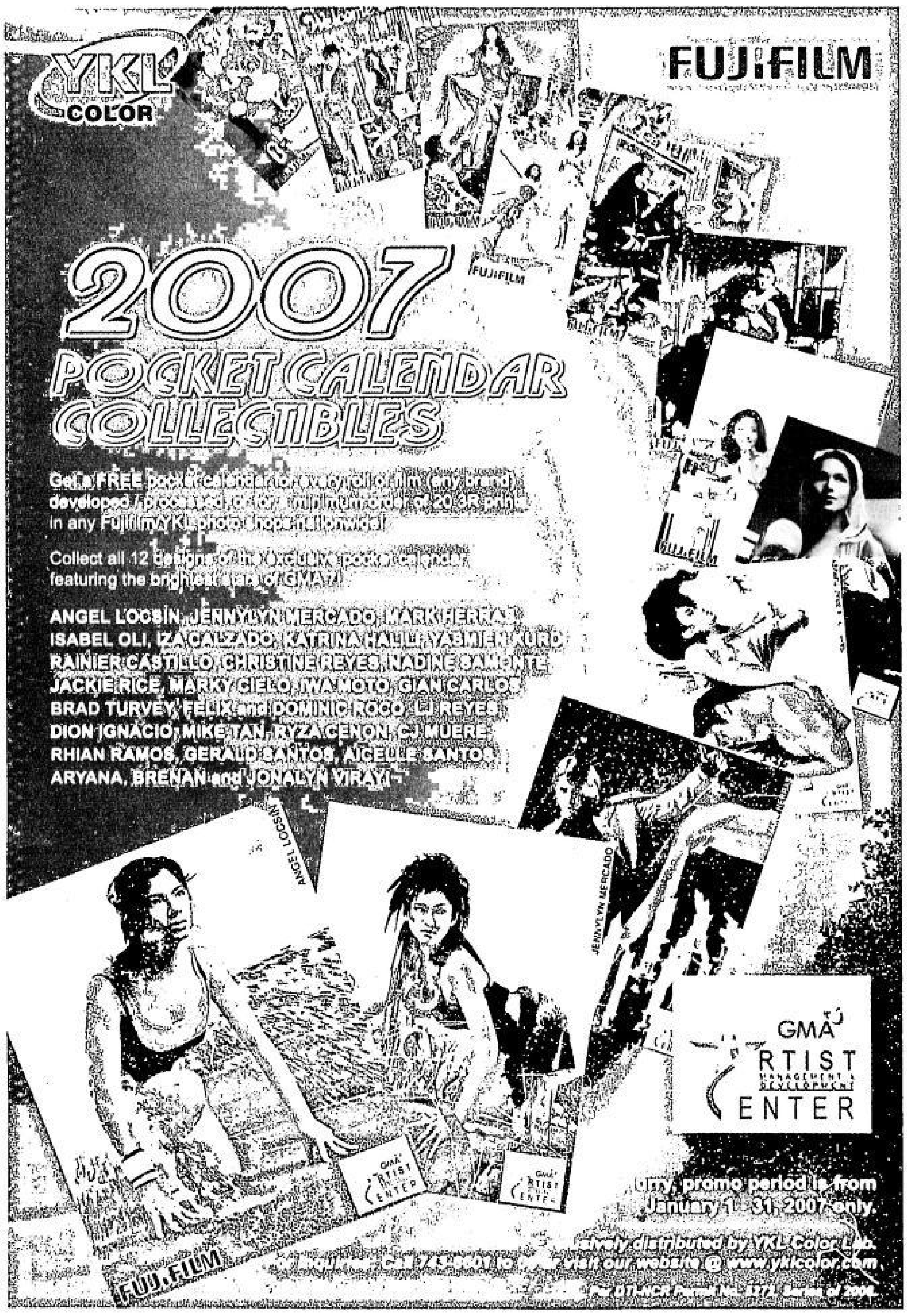
In a statement, Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay dismissed Estrada's protest, saying it was "proper and in accordance with the guidelines set down under the Constitution for all cabinet-level and ambassadorial appointees to pass the CA's muster."

Unlike ambassadors to sovereign countries, the Philippine ambassador to the UN can be appointed ad-interim until the commission decides to approve, disapprove or by-pass his appointment. In the latter case, the President can even choose to reappoint her nominee.

He said the UN does not need to approve the credentials of a country representative to its General Assembly, unlike an ambassador-designate to a sovereign country who needs to obtain the approval of the host-country before he can sit as ambassador.

"Ambassadors are not ambassadors until after there is an agrément, or a formal acceptance of an ambassador by a receiving state. That's why ambassadors to a sovereign country must first pass muster by the CA, because it would be a diplomatic faux pas if their credentials are vetted by the receiving country but they are subsequently rejected by the CA," said Pichay.

TJ Burgonio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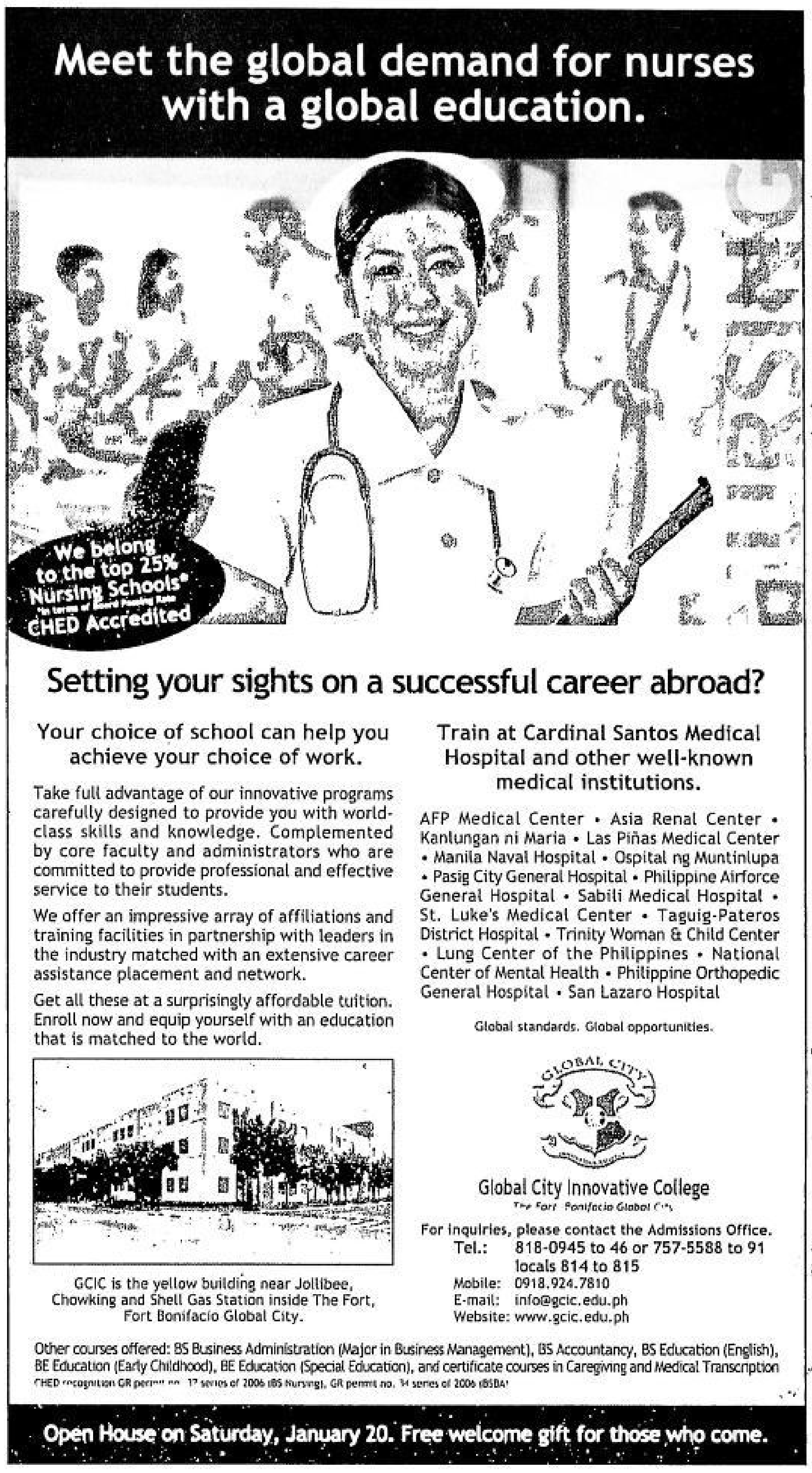
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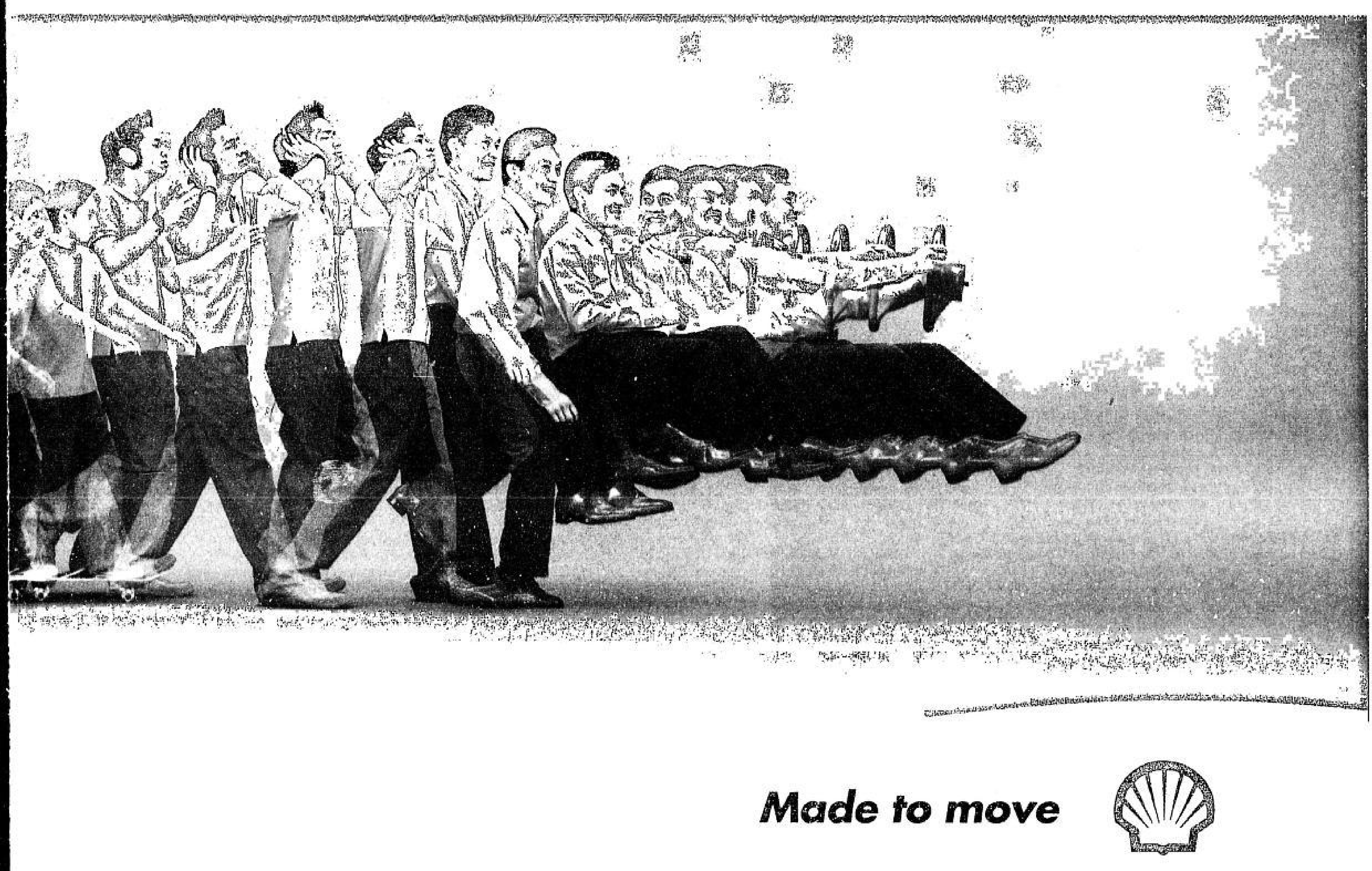

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OPINION

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Blacklists

EDITORIAL

WRITING IN THE JANUARY-FEBRUARY ISSUE OF the influential Foreign Affairs magazine, Singapore's Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew says American success is still possible in Iraq and the broader "war on terror"—but only if the United States takes a page out of its Cold War playbook. As Lee puts it, "The basic feature of US foreign policy during the Cold War was inclusiveness—a willingness to embrace any country that opposed communism, whatever its type of government." He advocates the same catholicity in opposing terrorism, which means stripping the fight of its democratic characteristics. After all, trying to unite antiterrorism with the spreading of democracy has achieved neither.

Of course, two decades ago, Corazon Aquino told the Americans that democracy was best built through the ways of democracy; and democracy, incidentally, seems something that Asean is trying, however feebly, to advocate. Why else would the Philippines, for example, apply pressure on Burma, if not to democratize it, and make democracy and its handmaidens—human rights, freedom of expression, etc.—no longer the shunned stepdaughter of the organization?

But here lies the dilemma Asean faces. In Cebu, regional leaders inked an agreement allowing any member of the organization to invoke the newly signed Convention on Counter-Terrorism to obtain information on, extradite and prosecute suspected terrorists across Asean's shared borders. The regional concern with the activities of terrorist groups, in particular the al-Qaida allied Jemaah Islamiyah and sympathetic groups, is genuine and necessary. The solution seems less so, particularly when viewed with Singapore's concern and emerging policy as expressed by Lee.

In essence, the anti-terrorism convention puts forward the possibility—or even the probability—of shared blacklists. Those lists are only as good and as useful as the nations producing them. This opens up the possibility of a regional agreement strengthening the potential for abuse of such lists by member governments. And even if we assume that no country would provide its neighbor with a flagrantly tainted list, the potential for shared information to cause ill-feeling among nations is great. We only have to recall how Singapore ended up detaining Filipinos who attended a recent World Bank meeting in the city-state, even though they were there upon the invitation of accredited organizations.

Of course, on the surface, Lee's appeal for the war on terror to resemble the Cold War suits our government's own official policies just fine. Cold War tactics include the original targets of such efforts, namely communists and anyone who can conveniently be painted red—and the Philippines is the only country with active Maoists bar one (Nepal, which isn't part of Asean). But the tensions that have always affected not only Philippine involvement in Asean but the relationship between Filipinos and their government's Asean policies won't go away.

Nor should they: We were democratic first. We understand its nuances in many ways better than many of our neighbors. And public opinion matters more to our leaders than for most of their Asean counterparts.

So how to balance our own democratic identity with a regional concern for security? At the very least, we should be prudent in what lists we invoke, and be wary of tagging either whole classes of people or organizations for whom a regional consensus that they represent a terrorist threat doesn't exist. When regional defense ministers meet in Manila on Jan. 25-26, to flesh out the anti-terrorism convention, the Philippines, where the Cold War has never really ended, shouldn't be the first to embrace Singapore's call for a new Cold War-style crusade.

We should welcome every means to make transit across our notoriously porous borders more difficult for those planning suicide bombings. Our own Mindanao peace process demands it. But it would be a tragedy to make Filipinos from academe, civil society, journalism or any other walk of life the first targets of potentially politically motivated and not security-mandated blacklists.

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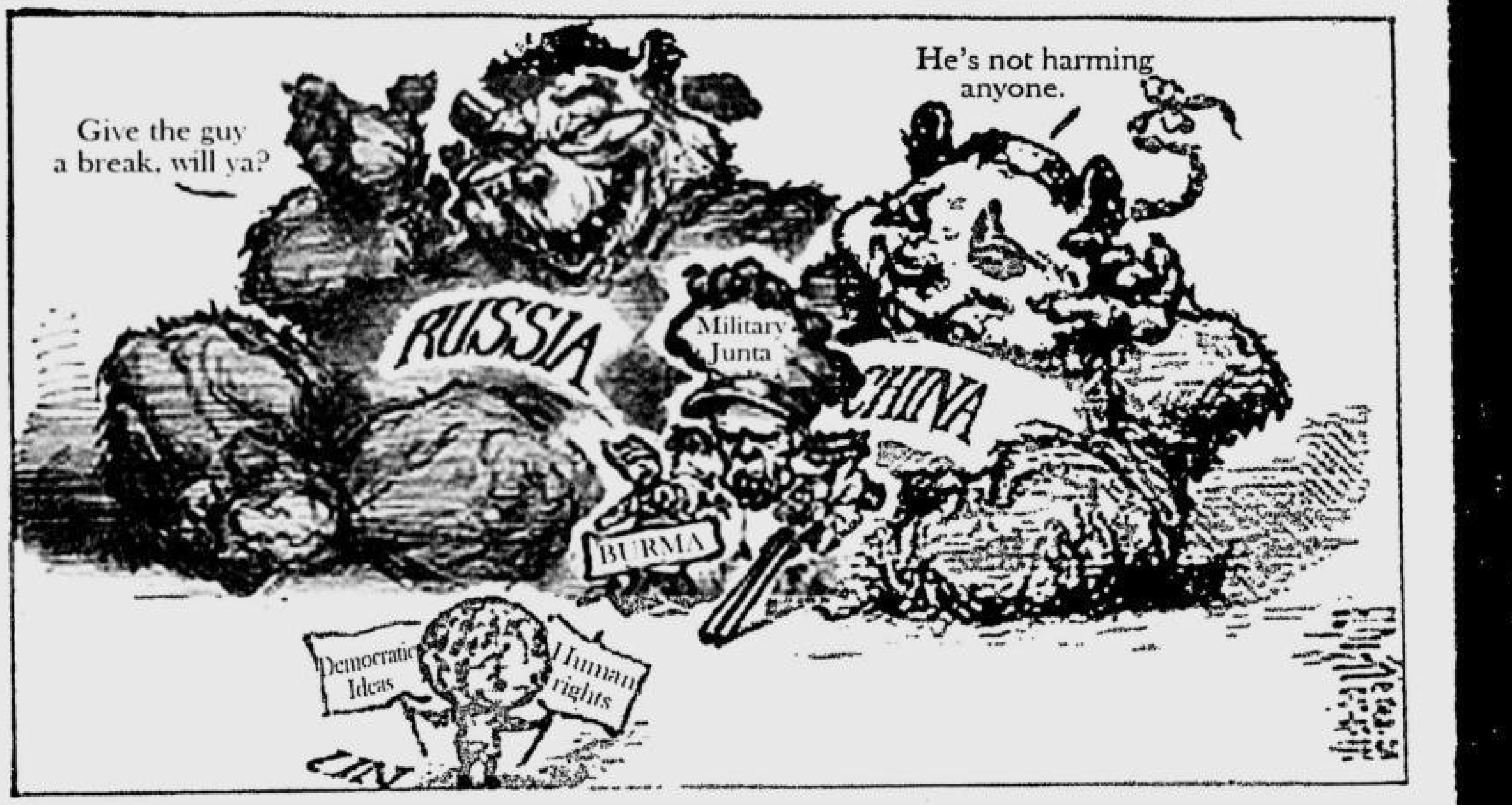

Manansala mural swapped for elevator, termites

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL PRESS CLUB are in an uproar over the clandestine sale, for P10 million, of the huge mural on the press by National Artist Vicente Manansala in the dining hall of the National Press Club. Termites and an old elevator were made as the excuses for the sale of a cultural treasure, the crown jewel of the NPC building.

Defenders of the sale said that termites were eating up the mural which is painted on lawanit boards, and that proceeds of the sale would be used to buy a new elevator. In short, an art treasure was being swapped for a small elevator and termites. Members never complained about the old elevator but they were furious at the sale of their beloved mural.

The buyer is an unidentified private individual, but the broker is reported to be Odette Alcantara of Heritage Galleries.

There is a big question whether the board of directors has the authority to sell the mural. The NPC president said the board approved the sale, and that an earlier general assembly also did. The surprise is that only the members of the board and their friends seem to have known about the assembly. Even if there were really such an assembly, it could not have had a quorum and therefore what it approved is not legal, said some members.

There are at least two other reasons why the NPC cannot sell that mural. The mural was commissioned to Vicente Manansala by the Manila Chronicle when the NPC building was being constructed in the mid-1950s. It was donated to the NPC by the Lopezes with the condition that if the NPC does not want the mural anymore, it would revert to the Lopez family, columnist I.P. Soliongco, who negotiated with his friend Manansala, told me (I was then a staff member of the Chronicle). I relayed this information to some NPC officers and members, but apparently the present board disregarded it.

The other reason the NPC cannot sell the mural is this: The premises, lot and building were donated by the government, in exchange for one peso, to the NPC, also on condition that if the press club doesn't want them anymore, they would revert to the government. The lot was mortgaged to the Government Service Insurance System to raise funds for the construction of the four-story building beside the Pasig River.

With that condition, the NPC cannot sell the lot or the building. The mural was painted on one huge wall of the dining hall, from floor to ceiling. It was a part of the building, and so it cannot be sold.

Another reason: When the NPC was unable to pay its loan to the GSIS, the latter foreclosed on the loan. With the foreclosure, the GSIS would have owned the building, including the mural. If that is correct, then the GSIS, which has its own art museum, owns the Manansala mural.

But there were many negotiations to give the building back to the NPC that, besides being unable to pay its debts to the GSIS and electric, water and phone firms, was unable to pay real estate taxes. One-half of the lot was given up to satisfy the debts either to GSIS or the realty taxes. Or the city government got one or the other lot and sold it at public auction, I am not sure which is which now.

The NPC also has huge debts to the Meralco, PLDT and Maynilad. They therefore should get first crack at any windfall for the NPC. Besides, because of the conditions to the donations, the mural should go to the government, the GSIS or the Lopez Museum.

This is not the first time that the NPC lost donations to it. A grand piano was lost to a gang that got the piano on the pretext that it would be repaired but never returned it. Nobody knows who its members were.

Singer-composer Jose Mari Chan donated P1 million to the NPC. Before the money reached the NPC treasury, P250,000 was already gone. And nobody knows what happened to the rest of the money.

Speaker Jose de Venecia claims to have donated P1 million. What happened to the money?

Before the end of my second term as NPC president, I set up a trust fund, donated by the Asian Wall Street Journal and a Filipino banker, for the training of Filipino business writers in the AWSJ headquarters in Hong Kong. The principal of P250,000 (still a lot of money in the 1970s) was not to be touched. It was supposed to grow from interest earnings and future donations. From its interest earnings, one or two reporters would be sent to Hong Kong yearly. Only one writer was able to benefit from it; nobody else was sent after I left. And nobody can say what happened to the rest of the trust fund.

That Manansala mural was almost lost before I became president. A fire that started in the kitchen almost destroyed it. It survived with soot all over it. When I became president, I had it cleaned by a restorer from the National Museum. When he could not totally clean it, I asked Manansala himself to look at it. He decided to retouch it. He was assisted by National Artist Ang Kiukok, Malang, Cris Cruz, Gig de Pio, and several other artists. Thus, Manansala painted that mural not only once but twice; two National Artists and a future one (Malang) painted it. It is a treasure and the members have the right to be angry at the surreptitious way it was sold.

There was no announcement, no hint given at all to the general membership. It was quietly removed from the NPC during the Christmas holidays when journalists were very busy. When some of them happened to drop by the NPC, they found it gone, replaced by plywood panels.

Members are now planning to file court suits and are asking the buyer to return the mural and get her money back.

'Puno't dulo'

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

AT NEARLY THE SAME TIME EARLY THIS week, two things happened in two parts of the world that are as different from each other as the earth is from the moon. One was the hanging of Saddam Hussein's half-brother, Barzan, and the former head of Iraq's Revolutionary Court, Awad Hamed al-Bandar, by Iraq's new government. The other was the sacking of Pasay Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad and several others by the Ombudsman. The two have nothing to do with each other. But they have one thing in common: They both turn a common act of justice into an uncommon act of iniquity.

Do Barzan Hussein and Awad Hamad al-Bandar deserve to die? Possibly, as did Saddam Hussein. Barzan and Awad were, in fact, supposed to have been hanged on the same day as Hussein, but their jailers decided to give Saddam a "special day," the better to spark jubilation from a people he had oppressed. Barzan and Awad were convicted of helping Saddam commit humongous crimes against humanity, which included the gassing to death of thousands of Kurds.

There is little doubt the condemned were bastards, but if the reports from CNN and BBC are anything to go by, jubilation is the last thing the hangings have sparked among Iraqis. Sporadic riots and widespread resentment are first. As one reporter said, if the Iraqi authorities had hoped the hangings would bring closure to Saddam, they were wrong. They merely opened up fresh wounds.

There has in fact been little jubilation in the world as well. The reason for it is easy to see. There is no doubt that the condemned were bastards, but there is no doubt as well their condemners are bigger bastards. There is no doubt that the Iraqi government is a puppet government put up by an occupation force. There is no doubt that the occupation is completely illegitimate, backed up neither by the approval of the United Nations nor by the conscience of the world. There is no justice in hanging Saddam Hussein, Barzan Hussein and Awad Hamad al-Bandar in their prison unless you also hang George W. Bush, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld from the nearest telephone pole, with or without their royal jewels intact.

The same is true with the ouster of Trinidad, Iloilo Gov. Neil Tupas, Jaen (Nueva Ecija) Mayor Antonio Esquivel and several others. I saw Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno on TV on the day it happened saying the move had nothing to do with politics, notwithstanding that the timing seemed to suck (elections are just months away) as any time was a good time to do what was right. The wonder of it was that a lightning bolt did not strike him where he stood, leaving only scorched ground and a wisp of smoke in its wake. The day Puno does anything—oh, yes, or did you really think that idea originated from the Olympian head of the ombudsman?—that has nothing to do with politics and everything to do with principle is the day GMA shuns power forever and enters a cloister to reflect on a miserable life. Well, maybe God really works in mysterious ways. Maybe God is punishing Puno by keeping him alive. Can you think of a worse punishment?

Do Trinidad et al. deserve to be sacked? Well, unlike Saddam et al., that is the part we can't be sure of. The current ombudsman's capacity to see wrong is not only selective, it is misguided—ombudsmen who get in time to be deathly afraid of being hit by a lightning bolt, like Simeon Marcelo, are suddenly afflicted by disease and resign. Maybe the condemned are guilty, though that is something that cannot be resolved by the courts, the recourse Puno proposes to the sacked officials instead of barricading themselves. At least not by GMA's and Puno's courts.

But even granting that the officials are guilty as hell, GMA sacking them is about as much a cause for rejoicing as Bush hanging Saddam. The deepest tragedy of this is that it turns what may very well be a common act of justice into an uncommon act of iniquity.

At the very least, it gives this already power-laden and power-mad regime another layer of power, indeed a mind-boggling one, to bludgeon this country to submission. It makes elections idiotic. Henceforth, no elected official, unless he is a senator or congressman, may ever feel safe in his office again. He can always have a crime dredged up against him (and name one official in this country, elected or otherwise, that hasn't a skeleton in his closet). Open Puno's and you'll be buried in an avalanche of bones. In this country, it's not "behind every great wealth is a great crime," it's "behind the pettiest ambition is the grandest malefaction." Henceforth no elected official may be safe—unless his name is Virgilio Garcillano or any variation thereof.

That fact alone, not quite incidentally—that one Virgilio Garcillano lives and breathes, never mind that he will probably find any vote for "Hello" and "Garci" counted in his favor in the coming elections—shows up the absolute malice of singling out Trinidad et al. for wrongdoing.

But far more than that, can there be any wrongdoing that is deeper, higher, heavier, blacker, deadlier, more enveloping, more crippling, more crushing, more wrong, wronger, wrongest, than what GMA and Puno did in the last elections? What is wrong with this government's sacking of Trinidad et al., independently of whether they deserve it or not, is exactly the same thing that was wrong with this government's attempted sacking of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay last year. It is that people who have no right to be there have the gall to sit in judgment over people who have every right to be there. Trinidad et al. may have betrayed the public trust, but the people who are ousting them never had the public trust at all.

That's the *puno't dulo*, the source and wellspring, of all that's wrong in this country.

Open season for mud-slinging

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

IT HAS BEEN SIX YEARS SINCE PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo took office during People Power II and more than two years since the infamous Garcillano tapes, on her alleged interference in the 2004 elections, triggered a crisis of legitimacy for her administration.

Early in the new year, on Jan. 9, the demons of 2001 came back to haunt the administration when Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez ordered the prosecution of former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez and three other persons on charges of graft, extortion and falsification of public documents. The order was based on a complaint originally filed with the Office of the Ombudsman as early as 2002 by former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez accusing Perez of plunder. Jimenez accused Perez of allegedly extorting $2 million from him in 2001 in exchange for easing the pressure being exerted by Perez on Jimenez to execute affidavits damaging to the cronies of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Earlier in a privilege speech, Jimenez claimed that Perez had demanded the payoff to ensure approval by the incoming Arroyo government of a contract signed by the outgoing Estrada administration with the Argentine firm Industrias Metallurgicas Perscarmona Sociedad Anonima (Impsa) for the rehabilitation and operation of the Caliraya power plant in Laguna. Jimenez claimed a larger kickback of $14 million was paid to unnamed people associated with the new administration.

Perez has questioned the Ombudsman's action on his indictment, saying the extortion and graft charges were "either false or inadmissible hearsay."

The indictment of Perez comes at a time when the administration has not brought closure to the Garcillano tape controversy that has rocked the regime for the past two years. It reopens the Impsa controversy, which also involves the Estrada administration.

The resurrection of the Perez complaint, lodged by people with axes to grind and links to the Estrada government—such as Jimenez, who was an adviser of Estrada on "Latin American affairs"—signals the opening of a fresh season of mudslinging as the country approaches a critical mid-term election in May 2007. It sets the tone for the coming campaign and elections. And it comes in a year that started with a national agenda that is so strikingly bankrupt of any fresh initiative from either the administration or the opposition to move the country out of the impasse in which it was locked last year after the two failed impeachment complaints against the president and the declaration of the national emergency in February after an aborted coup attempt by segments of the Armed Forces.

Against the stale political landscape of the new year, it is a mystery why the administration acted to prosecute Perez after it had sat on the complaint for nearly six years. It is equally puzzling to determine who would benefit from the complaint—whether it is the administration or its many detractors—since the case has complex ramifications and is seeded with heavy political fallout potentially damaging to all sides.

Gutierrez decided to recommend the filing of the graft and extortion charges against Perez, in response to public pressure for her office to act on the complaint filed by Jimenez six years ago. She told Congress in October last year that her office would resolve the plunder case against Perez some time this year. Early in the new year, she lived up to the promise with a resolution to file the complaint but disappointed critics with a decision to file graft and extortion charges instead of the more serious case of plunder.

Gutierrez said investigators had uncovered a "paper trail" supporting Jimenez's allegation that the payoff had been made, including bank records in Hong Kong and Geneva. "Documents and evidence gathered by Ombudsman investigators established the allegation of Jimenez that Perez extorted $2 million from him," she said. "He (Perez) may have been my former boss but I have to apply the law."

However, the ombudsman's recommendation said nothing about the allegations of wider payoffs involving $14 million. What then is the ombudsman's game?

The anti-garft agency said it decided to prosecute in the interest of impartial application of the law. But is Perez being made a scapegoat in an effort to blunt opposition moves to reopen the Impsa case. Sen. Panfilo Lacson has filed a resolution with the Senate to reopen an inquiry into the alleged kickbacks on the Impsa deal.

Realizing the damage done by the ombudsman's resolution on the administration's credibility, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita quickly declared Perez "innocent." Perez played a stellar role in the impeachment of Estrada on the prosecution panel.

With the reopening of the case, either in the courts or in a Senate investigation, Perez can talk, and he will have many things to say. Jimenez can also be subpoenaed to testify, and what he would say may not make Estrada happy. For example, Perez can shed light on why he submitted an opinion in favor of the Impsa contract just two days after Ms Arroyo took over the presidency in January 2001 and why she approved Perez's opinion.

When Jimenez returned to Manila last Dec. 18 after serving a jail sentence in the United States for two years and three months on charges of tax evasion and conspiracy to defraud the US government as well as election-financing offenses, Ermita said he was not worried.

Let's wait and see. And let's watch for the fallout.

Technology and quality of content

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THE FIRST THING WE DID UPON OUR LATE ARrival at the celebration of the 79th anniversary of The Varsitarian, the student newspaper of the University of Santo Tomas, was to pay a visit to the spanking new offices of the "V."

Yesterday's celebration was to kick off the year-long preparations for Varsi's 80th anniversary next year, with the fund-raisers supposed to be inspired, I suppose, by an exhibit on the paper's past and present at the UST Museum. But I think the best proof of the distance that the Varsi has traveled, at least since our years there, were its new offices at the new Tan Yan Kee building, supposed to house student organizations.

The new "V" office is far roomier than any of the offices it has occupied in the Main Building. It even boasts a reception area, as well as a kitchen, dining area and storage room that truly floored us. Aside from an office for the publications director, there are also separate offices for the editor in chief and managing editor, and a work area for the rest of the staff consisting of cubicles each equipped with the latest PC model.

Jesselynn Garcia dela-Cruz, who had served as editor in chief and publications assistant in the 1980s, asked one of the student staffers how often The Varsitarian came out these days. "Every three weeks," she was told. "In our time," Jesselynn said archly, "the 'V' came out weekly—and we still used typewriters then!"

We all had a good laugh at this, though I suspect the student journalists thought they should indulge our nostalgia for the way things were, like grandchildren patiently sitting through their old folks fondly remembering how as children they would hike over hills and rivers just to get to school every day.

* * *

THE "VARSI" offices in my day were located strategically in one corner of the Main Building facing the main campus thoroughfare, bordered by huge windows with intricate grills. We could stand by the window and hail passing friends and classmates.

If they so wished, passersby could glance in and find us come deadline time pounding on a few manual typewriters, their carcasses on full display since they had lost their cases years before. The typewriter keys and ribbon spools also bore a rather thick layer of cigarette ash, as student writers of various generations claimed chain smoking was a spur to creativity. I didn't buy the argument, because when I tried to combine the two activities, I found the smoke stinging my eyes and I was distracted by the need to stop now and then to flick ashes onto an ashtray.

When I became editor in chief, my "office" was a simple glass-topped desk that all my friends in the staff promptly converted into a photo gallery filled with "wacky" poses that no wedding photographer needed to coax us into assuming.

Many a campus romance blossomed in the Varsi office, usually under the cover of darkness, when wooden shutters kept the streetlights out of the empty premises. Taking in the neat, spic-and-span and brightly-lit quarters of the present "V," I couldn't help wondering what sort of extracurricular activities could be fostered in such antiseptic surroundings.

But as Pennie Azarcon-dela Cruz, who was my associate editor and is now Sunday Inquirer editor, reminded me, "Young people will always find a way."

* * *

PHOTOGRAPHER Noli Yamsuan, who was the long-time boyfriend (and now husband) of former editor in chief Peachy Evangelista, so much so that everyone, including the researchers who prepared the exhibit, assumed he had been a Varsi photographer, observed that the new offices lacked only one thing: a darkroom.

Oh, for those days of pungent chemicals and liquid-filled pans, and clotheslines from which hung damp photo paper imprinted with images! Technology, of course, has rendered the dark room obsolete, as well as the entire gamut of equipment, from enlargers to developers, that every self-respecting photographer once needed.

There's an entire field of occupations that have in fact been rendered useless by technology. One of these is typesetting, since copy, these days known as "text," is sourced from the writers and editors themselves, no longer needing the intercession of people who "key in" the words from typewritten documents onto galley proofs.

As Varsitarian staffers, we also used to spend hours in the printing press, watching "strippers" prepare a week's issue. No, they weren't into undressing, but into attaching negatives onto page flats, each signature "photographed" and imprinted into metal sheets, which in turn would be smeared with ink and start printing the pages of the "V."

With the advent of desktop publishing and the requirement of most printing presses for clients to submit CDs of their contents for printing, I doubt very much if these days the average journalism student still knows the stage-by-stage process that leads to the preparation of the finished product.

* * *

INDEED, I doubt very much if journalists of tomorrow will still practice journalism as we know it today.

With the advent of blogs and video streaming, the media are no longer the product of team work and a hierarchical process which saw news stories go from hand-to-hand, or screen-to-screen before they were deemed fit for publication. Who edits the blogger, who may not have a iota of talent or wisdom, but feels free to impose his or her own view of the world on the entire world?

The new information technology may be heaven-sent to someone seeking self-expression, but does it help the reader much? In a newspaper, at least, one knows a whole slew of people worked on the contents: gathering facts, writing, editing, checking and re-checking. Who can guarantee the worth of content in the new, free-market media?

Fifteen Martyrs of Bicol

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

MANY OF US WHO WERE RAISED ON TEXTBOOK history can still remember things like "Sublime Paralytic," "Brains of the Katipunan," "Great Plebeian" and "Great Malayan." We easily connect the titles with the names without really knowing how these came about. Then, to complicate things, we have sets like "Martyrs of Bagumbayan." But it is one thing to know all the names and another to know what they did to deserve a bullet in the back.

Despite a century of commemoration, we know little about these men and whether they should rightfully be remembered as martyrs or heroes. Francisco Roxas, for example, wasn't involved in the Katipunan. He refused to provide financial support and was framed by Andres Bonifacio. Was he the only one among the 13 martyrs who was unjustly executed? Shouldn't his name be taken off the list to underscore the sacrifice of the real martyrs of Bagumbayan?

Based on the story of Roxas, what can we say about Jose Rizal who insisted on his innocence during his trial? Can we also say that he was framed, too, by being made, without his knowledge and consent, honorary president of the Katipunan? Was it his fault that his name was a Katipunan password or that his photograph hung prominently in the Katipunan meeting hall?

Over a century has passed, but textbook history remains basically unchanged. To remedy this, there is a move to erect a Wall of Remembrance in Rizal Park to remind us of all the Martyrs of Bagumbayan, and not just those who were shot in January 1897.

In Naga, there is a monument that looks like an elaborate wedding cake. It was dedicated in 1926 to remind us of the "Quince Martires de Bicol."

History records that 15 men (most of them Masons) were arrested in Bicol some time in September 1896 for complicity in the Katipunan. After enduring verbal and physical abuse in the province, they were transported on board the steamer Isarog to Manila, where they were imprisoned in Bilibid, except for the priests who were kept in San Agustin. The defense team in the one-day trial included a military officer named Taviel de Andrade who unsuccessfully served on Rizal's case.

While all 15 are commemorated, only 11 were actually executed in Bagumbayan on Jan. 4, 1897. Leon Hernandez and Mariano Ordenanza were imprisoned. The former died as a result of torture on Oct. 16, 1896, while the latter served a 20-year prison term. Ramon Abella and Mariano Arana were exiled to a Spanish colony in West Africa, called Fernando Po, where they died in captivity circa 1897-1898 after a regimen of hard work, abuse, rice, condensed milk and rancid bacon.

There were three secular priests in the group: Frs. Gabriel Prieto, Severino Diaz and Innocencio Herrera. There is no mention whether they were, like Gomburza, executed wearing their frocks. Prieto was actually implicated by his own brother Tomas, a pharmacist who gave a confession under torture. Another family group consisted of Manuel Abella, one of the wealthiest men in Bicol, and his two sons Domingo and Ramon. Manuel was one of the oldest to be executed at 60, and his son Domingo, at 25 years old, was the youngest. Ramon was exiled to Fernando Po.

The others executed were: Camilo Jacob, a photographer; Macario Valentin, a sergeant of the Night Guards in Naga (whatever that means); Cornelio Mercado, who worked in the government public works office; Mariano Melgarejo, originally from Sta. Cruz, Manila, who had settled in Naga and also worked in the public works office; and Florencio Lerma.

Data is scanty on the group, except for Florencio Lerma (1868-1897), a musician originally from Quiapo who moved to Naga in 1889 where he became organist at the Naga cathedral and taught music at Colegio de Santa Isabel. He opened a bazaar, carriage shop (like his mother) and sold leather goods. He was seriously into racing and sometimes traveled to Manila with his prize horses. He was imprisoned when a rifle was found inside the organ he was playing. His daughter Patrocinio remembered:

"After 16 days of solitary confinement, my father was taken from the Presidio and brought to Bilibid and after a few days was transferred with his companions to the precinct of the Veterana in Tondo. The lieutenant of the Veterana and his office clerk occupied an office on the upper floor of this hole of crime. My father and his companions were on the lower floor; and before they were called to confirm the declarations which appeared on the record of the case sworn to by them by the governor of Nueva Caceres, a corporal of the Veterana ordered my father to be tied hand and foot to a bench, after which he violently whipped him countless times over the wounds and bruises he already had, and which now oozed out blood and matter. Exhausted of his strength, the corporal told my father that he had received orders to whip him to death if he did not ratify and affirm the contents of his previous sworn statement and if he did not declare in addition that the rifles received had been thrown into the river of Nueva Caceres. Under the circumstances, there was no other choice but to accede to the wishes of tyrants and to affirm, as if they were absolute truths, the falsehoods that appeared on the record. The same fate befell his companions."

What we know is not enough and needs further research to validate and underscore their sacrifice.

(Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu)

Asean might

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THROUGHOUT THE 12TH ASEAN SUMMIT, WE KEPT hearing about Asean being "One Caring and Sharing Community." My initial reaction was that it sounded a bit too much like an advertisement for a real estate subdivision, but then it did get me thinking, too, about how serious we are in Asean about this "caring" and "sharing" bit.

For starters, that would mean more efforts to understand each other, in this 21st century. We Filipinos may have to put in a bit more effort, being perhaps the most marginalized, culturally, from the other countries in the region. Often described as the most "Westernized," we seem to have little interest in the cultures of our neighbors. Over at the University of the Philippines, I regularly ask students what foreign languages they're taking, and rarely do they mention one of the Asian languages. If they do, it's Japanese and, among Asean languages, a handful opt for Bahasa Indonesia.

But it isn't just a matter of learning other countries' languages and history. Even at the level of popular culture, we seem to scoff at our neighbors. Last year, while going through a small mall in Kuala Lumpur, I was greeted by life-sized posters of Jericho Rosales and Kristine Hermosa in front of video shops, advertising their telenovela "Ngayong Nandito Ka," with Bahasa Malaysia subtitles. The VCD box had a come on: "Filipino Most Romantic Couple."

That wasn't an isolated phenomenon. Throughout Southeast Asia there's interest in pop music and videos of the region. You'll find Thai movies in Singapore's Changi Airport shops, and Vietnamese movies in Bangkok's DVD stores. Many years ago, Indonesian friends were already humming Freddie Aguilar's "Anak" to me, and last year, one Indonesian professor asked how he could get more Filipino "acoustic" songs.

Colorful past

More than popular culture though, there's much to uncover in a shared past. Certainly, regional trading isn't a new thing. Even before our contact with Western colonizers, our region was already a hub of economic activity for centuries. We were trading in all kinds of commodities, from forest food products to gold. The wealthy indios in the Philippines were already importing Chinese ceramics, original ones from China as well as imitations (pirated copies) from Vietnam.

Where there's trading, there's cultural exchange. Islam gained a foothold in the Philippines perhaps less from direct contact with Arabs than with those already converted in neighboring areas. To give just one example, the sultanates of Tondo and Brunei already had special relations, similar to contemporary "sister cities" arrangements. We borrowed Arab words, many associated with religion and philosophy, again filtered through Malay and Old Javanese. No VCDs then, but I'm sure there was an exchange of folk tales, including a few love stories thrown in for good measure.

Anthropology, archaeology and linguistics offer many clues to our shared heritage. One reason Filipinos might feel marginalized in the region is that we still think of mainland Southeast Asia as being culturally very different from us. If we find affinity, it is in Indonesia and the Philippines, which are more "Austronesian" in language and culture.

But we forget there are also Austronesian groups in Vietnam, with cultures that are very similar to those of the Philippines and Indonesia. While going through the exhibits at Hanoi's Ethnological Museum, I was struck by how similar their material culture and rituals were to those of Indonesia and the Philippines, from rice terraces to the slaughtering of water buffalo (carabao) in rituals.

Here's something else that's intriguing: Unlike most of the other strongly patriarchal groups in mainland Southeast Asia, the Austronesians in Vietnam are matrilineal, that is, they trace their ancestries through the mother's side. I say that's intriguing because it reminds us of how women may have more space, more power, in our part of the world, compared to other Asian regions. In fact, Western accounts of the region during the pre-colonial and early colonial period noted how "free" women were and actively engaged in trade and politics, mainly diplomacy.

Democratic future

We look to the past so we can move into the future. That applies as well to our search for some common "Asean values." Sadly, there's been too much talk about how different we are from "Westerners," including arguments that such concepts as democracy and human rights and women's rights are imported and inappropriate.

It's time we mined our history, our languages, to show how we do have notions of rights, and how central they are to our cultures. I keep thinking of the 10th century copper plate found in Laguna, certifying that someone named Namwaran had paid off his debts and was therefore now a free man, together with his wife and family. We had certain norms in place around governance and citizenship, if we might use those terms loosely.

I sometimes read about how Asean might become like the European Union, with a European Parliament and a common currency, the euro. But the road to that parliament and currency has not been easy, marked by often acrimonious debates. That has included debates around shared "European values" that will be reflected in the parliament's legislation. But the Europeans do consider it important to discuss these values, which again often involves going back in history. Their emphasis on rights, emerging from the Enlightenment and liberalism, has been translated into a strict requirement that any country seeking entry to the EU must abolish the death penalty.

We need to think about that in Asean, too. There has been much debate, for example, on Burma and its military dictatorship, and whether Asean has the right to sanction that country. Yet, the region tends to look up to Singapore, which we admire for its efficiency and progress and which we attribute to Lee Kuan Yew's "authoritarianism." I'd be careful there: Lee was light years away from other dictators in the region, including our own Marcos, coming more closely to a long tradition of god-kings in our region, mixed with some of the city-state democratic tradition from ancient Greece.

Patriarchal and feudal, yes, but the god-king tradition also had a strong sense of accountability which you still find today in the Thai monarchy and political system: fail the people and you lose your mandate to rule. We can build on that as we continue to debate on how democracy is to be nurtured in our region.

Asean started out mainly as an anti-communist bloc of nations. Today, it is mainly a vehicle for economic relations, sidestepping politics and culture. Asean might is a "might"—meaning a potential, which depends so much on our coming to terms with our past and our present. Once we learn to tap into our shared culture—cognizant of both its strengths and frailties—we can move forward in tandem, both politically and economically.

Political grandstanding to woo the labor vote

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HAS approved House Bill 345 which seeks to grant an across-the-board P125 wage increase nationwide. The bill has yet to be approved by the Senate though.

Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr., president of the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines, has warned that many companies which can't afford the increase might have to retrench or close shop. Ambassador Donald Dee of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry has pointed out that increasing wages was not the single, biggest solution to the economic problem. ("Labor leaders urge Senate to OK P125 pay hike," PDI, 1/5/07)

Here we go again. It's election year. Congressmen want to court the labor vote. So long as RA 6727 is not repealed or amended, Congress is estopped from legislating a law that allows for a P125 wage increase. Under RA 6727, each region has a regional tripartite wage and productivity board that prescribes the rules and guidelines for determining appropriate measures at the provincial, regional and industry levels. Each board is composed of two members from the government sector, two members from the workers' sector and two members from the employers' sector. It is they who are authorized to determine and fix wage rates in their provinces, regions and industries. They are mandated to issue corresponding wage increases subject to the guidelines promulgated by the National Wages and Productivity Commission.

Therefore, as long as the regional tripartite wage and productivity boards and the NWPC are not abolished, Congress cannot pass a law for any wage increase. House Bill 345 is shameful political grandstanding to woo the labor vote.

—ELIGIO M. PASTORIN,
Rositaville Subd.,
Concepcion, Marikina City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Keep a tight watch on where Smith is

I AM ALSO NOT IN FAVOR OF LANCE Cpl. Daniel Smith's transfer to the US Embassy. But then, because Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney signed an agreement last Dec. 22 that Smith should be held under the custody of the American government in keeping with Visiting Forces Agreement, the Philippines has no choice. All we can do now is to keep a tight watch on the whereabouts of Smith.

—LYRA SEGISMUNDO,
433 Tagaytay St.,
Caloocan City

No longer a question of a better alternative

I WANT TO REGISTER MY INDIGNATION against President Macapagal-Arroyo's complete disregard of our country's judicial process.

He/she who steals an election cannot be expected to have the decency to follow the rule of law. An illegitimate president is prone to commit illegal acts, as shown by the transfer of Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith to US custody without a court order/resolution.

I never supported the move to impeach Ms Arroyo because I believed then there was no better alternative to her. But now, even if a better alternative cannot be found, I will give a call for impeachment my 100-percent support. We can no longer afford to let a president (who cheated her way into her office) continue trampling our rights just to please a foreign government.

—GERALD ZAPANTA,
gzapanta@hotmail.com,
31 M. Ponce St.,
Bagong Barrio,
Caloocan City

Kapatiran's elitism recalls US founders

WITH ALL DUE RESPECT TO DAVID SAN Juan, who disagreed with the INQUIRER's editorial "An alternative" (PDI, 12/26/06), may I in all humility react:

San Juan said that the Kapatiran Party is "elite." Does San Juan know who are the elite members of the Kapatiran Party? Webster's New Explorer Dictionary defines "elite" as the choice part; or a superior group, and "elitism" as leadership or rule by an elite, also advocacy of such elitism.

When America revolted against the British Empire, it was led by a member of the elite, George Washington, who became the first president of the United States.

The political leaders who wrote the Constitution of the United States were all members of the elite.

—ISIDORO A. PANLASIGUI JR.,
6 Big Horseshoe Drive,
Barangay Horseshoe Village,
1112 Quezon City

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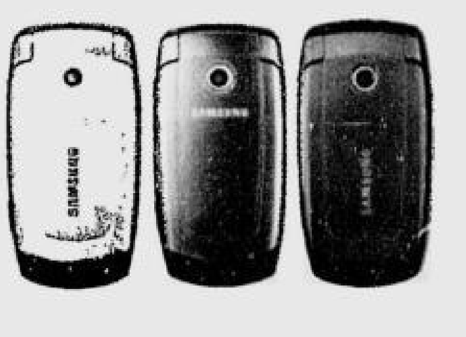

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Dirty politics on display in P125 wage increase

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES RECENTLY passed a bill setting a P125 increase in daily wage nationwide. The next step is for the Senate to act on the bill before it is submitted to the President for signing into law.

The House has no business setting a national minimum wage or legislating wage increases. This is the job of the regional wage boards.

The bill passed by the House was intended to curry favor with the electorate and win votes in the May 2007 elections. If the majority of the senators will not agree to the P125 wage increase, the members of the House will use the issue to revive their clamor for the abolition of the Senate. For their part, some senators, like Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, will bat for a lower wage increase, primarily to court votes, even if he knows there are other government agencies that are tasked to deal with the issue. The militant labor organizations and their allies will predictably go all out for the P125 wage increase and damn those who oppose it.

For want of votes, the members of the House have stirred a hornet's nest. They couldn't care less if they pit one sector of society against another for as long as they satisfy their personal needs.

We are always reminded before elections to be very careful about voting for politicians who do not truly represent us but only think of themselves. Shall this reminder fall on deaf ears, again and again?

Just think, if wages are upped by P125 a day, prices of goods will naturally go up, too. Industry will just pass on the higher cost of production to the consumer. Those who cannot afford to pay the new wage rate will either cut down on production, retrench workers or shut down their establishments. We are just starting to feel the effects of an energized economy. But with the wage increase, prospective investors will rethink their plans and consider other countries where the climate of investment is more favorable.

See what dirty politicians can do to our country?

—APOLINARIO G. RAMOS,
42 Mindanao St., Marikina City

A senator until 2010

MAY I THANK THE INQUIRER'S EMINENT columnist, Neal Cruz, for his column on the probable opposition slate for the 2007 senatorial elections. (PDI, 1/10/07)

I am especially appreciative of his remarks about the capacity of my son, Koko, to do the work of a senator should he be elected in the May elections.

May I just point out that as a senator, my term ends in 2010, not this year, as Cruz suggests.

—SEN. NENE PIMENTEL

GMA's last card

FIRST THERE WAS CHARTER CHANGE; NOW we have the transfer of the convicted rapist, US Marine Daniel Smith, to US custody. The "Rah-Rah Boys" of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo justify this move by citing the Visiting Forces Agreement, forgetting altogether the Philippine government's commitments to the Filipino people. It seems that the Arroyo administration has its own set of laws that make a mockery of the Philippine Constitution and the Filipino people. It seems that GMA, having lost credibility and respect before Filipinos, has only the support of the US government to remain in power.

What could be the next "subversive" decision this administration is planning to make? Election is just around the corner. We the Filipino people should be vigilant and take an active role in this political exercise. Take note, this is GMA's last card, and she will do everything to remain in power.

—IÑIGO MIGUEL J. HINAYON,
26 C. Francisco St., North Susana
Executive Village, Old Balara, Quezon City

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Dismissed officials dig in; DILG sets 48-hr deadline

From page A1

rary restraining order or a preliminary injunction from the Court of Appeals.

"We won't give away this capitol. This capitol is for the duly elected governor. Unless they make use of force, we won't leave," said Ronaldo Geron, provincial administrator.

Puno expressed confidence that the tense situations in the capitols, city and town halls of Iloilo, Batangas, Pasay and Jaen would be resolved peacefully even before the deadline he had set lapses on Thursday.

"As the secretary said, they have 48 hours to physically clear the capitol. I believe that in the end they will yield," Andanar said.

Puno on Monday said that criminal charges, such as sedition and malicious mischief, could be filed against the local executives.

"Barricading the capitol or the municipal hall is [an act] that can sometimes lead to a case of sedition," Puno said.

"They can gather (but) not block the premises. If they do that they can be liable for malicious mischief. Initially, there may still be no element of sedition," he said.

Don't shoot messenger

Sedition is a crime committed when persons rise publicly to prevent the government or a public officer from freely exercising his functions.

"We are just the messengers here. They shouldn't be shooting the messengers," Puno said of the DILG's role in serving the dismissal and suspension orders from the Ombudsman.

Already, certain government functions have been hampered by the barricades.

"If Sanchez gets a temporary restraining order he won't find me barricading the capitol, welding the gates, bringing in trucks," said Vice Gov. Richard Recto who was sworn in as the officer in charge of Batangas at the DILG central office in Quezon City.

"All I need is a phone call and I will vacate," Recto told reporters.

Targeting opposition?

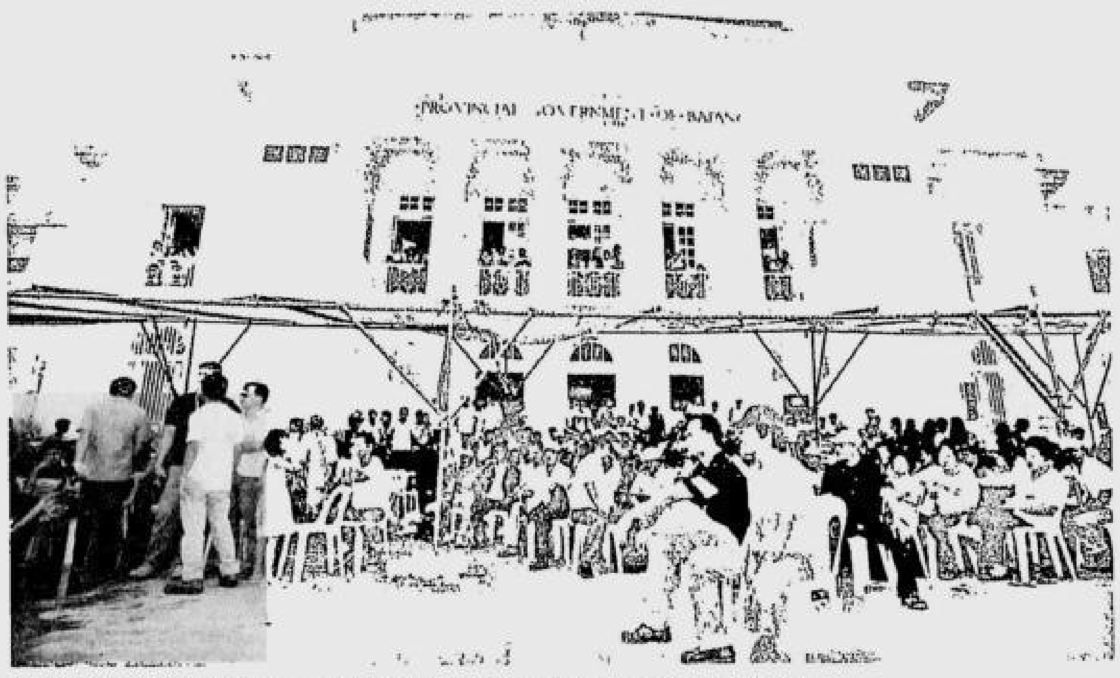
The dismissal of the local executives, mostly from the political opposition, was causing "public anxiety," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said.

"The administration wants to send the message that it's running after scalawags in the local government," he said in an interview.

Pimentel, however, said that the orders from the Ombudsman appeared to be targeting opposition stalwarts who were perceived to be runaway winners against administration candidates in the May elections.

"The public anxiety will be put to rest if the suspensions and dismissals of local officials will cut across the political divide."

Pimentel wondered why the Ombudsman was not touching Cagayan de Oro City Mayor Vicente Emano, who is facing several graft charges.



HUMAN BARRICADE: Supporters of suspended Batangas Gov. Armand Sanchez (below) block the entry to the provincial capitol at press time. The DILG says the PNP will enforce the law when the deadline lapses on Thursday.

ERIK ARAZAS

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said there appeared to be "double standard" in the enforcement of orders, pointing out that the government hastily served the dismissal orders on Tupas and Trinidad, but took time to enforce a similar order on Sanchez, an administration ally.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan and Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II took up the cudgels for Tupas, their party mate in the Liberal Party wing of Sen. Franklin Drilon.

"I denounce the plan to illegally remove Gov. Niel Tupas from his governorship. Governor Tupas has been an advocate for transparency and accountability in the province of Iloilo and in the Liberal Party," Pangilinan said.

Like thief in the night

Roxas echoed Drilon's earlier statement that Tupas was dismissed without "due process."

Five governors of Western Visayas allied with President Macapagal-Arroyo condemned the dismissal of Tupas.

"(T)he order to dismiss him came like a thief in the night," Antique Gov. Salvacion Zaldivar-Perez said.

Perez, chair of the Regional Development Council, said the governors decided to issue a manifesto expressing their collective stand on Tupas' dismissal.

Aside from Perez, the manifesto will be signed by Governors Carlito Marquez (Aklan), Vicente Bermejo (Capiz), JC Rahman Nava (Guimaras) and Joseph Marañon (Negros Occidental).

Perez belongs to the LP faction headed by Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

Despite breaking ties with the administration, Tupas has been very cooperative and supportive of the President's program, especially on tourism and infrastructure projects, Perez said.

"Tupas is a very popular and strong governor and he has no opponent (in the May elections)," said Perez.

Backlash

She warned those behind the order that the dismissal of Tupas could result in a "terrible backlash against the President."

In Jaen, Esquivel said in a radio interview that his case involved his alleged illegal dismissal of three board members of the municipal waterworks district in the town three years ago.

Based on existing rules, it appears that mayors have only the authority to appoint, not terminate, the services of the board members of the waterworks.

"But I ordered the return to their post upon being informed by officials of the Local Water Utilities Administration and by the DILG of that existing rule. Nevertheless, one of them decided to pursue the case with the Ombudsman instead of going back to his post," he said.

Esquivel said Nueva Ecija Rep. Rodolfo Antonino had a hand in his dismissal.

Antonino denied Esquivel's allegation.

No due process

In Pangasinan, Aguilar Mayor Ricardo Evangelista said he was surprised to learn that he was being suspended by the Ombudsman for a complaint that, he said, he knew nothing about.

He said he never received any subpoena that would allow him to answer the charges. He said he just learned about the complaint when the DILG provincial office served the suspension order on Saturday.

The Ombudsman ordered the preventive suspension of Evangelista for four months for alleged dishonesty and misconduct arising from his alleged irregular disbursement of the town's special education fund.

He said the complaint was politically motivated because the complainant, Priscilla Villanueva, a supervisor of the Department of Education, was the aunt of Vice Mayor Cesar Villanueva. *With reports from Marlon Alexander Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon; and Gabriel Cardinoza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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'Plunder may still be filed vs Nani if ...

From page A1

"It is still possible that additional evidence may be submitted for a case of plunder (to be filed)," Demeterio said on the sidelines of a news conference where the Ombudsman explained that there was no politics involved in its sacking of local officials. *(See banner story.)*

The Office of the Ombudsman announced on Jan. 8 that it would file charges against Perez and three others after a panel of prosecutors found probable cause to indict them.

Graft prosecutors said there was sufficient evidence to establish that Perez and company had committed "illegal acts," based on bank documents presented by Jimenez.

The documents included the $2-million deposit that Jimenez had wired to businessman Ernest Escaler's account in Coutts Bank in Hong Kong in February 2001, which was transferred later to Ramon Arceo and Rosario Perez's Swiss accounts.

Motion for reconsideration

Overall Deputy Ombudsman Orlando Casimiro said the filing of extortion and graft charges against Perez may take more time after Perez submitted last week a motion for reconsideration.

"We are mandated to decide on motions for reconsideration in 15 days. But if there are new issues which have been raised that need to be looked into, this (timeframe) may not be complied with," Casimiro said.

He, however, said that if the motion for reconsideration raised old issues, the Ombudsman may decide on it in no time at all.

In his motion, Perez said there was no crime for which he can be prosecuted.

On the charge that he extorted money from Jimenez, Perez said that Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño had told Ombudsman investigators that there was neither threat nor intimidation when he (Perez) discussed information that may be used to prosecute deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Uncorroborated

"Yet, unexplainably and despite the fact that the assertions under oath of the Chief State Prosecutor was never made the subject of rebuttal by Mario B. Crespo aka Mark Jimenez, the Ombudsman chose to rely on the uncorroborated statement of the latter," Perez said in the motion for reconsideration.

Perez said Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, his former undersecretary at the Department of Justice, had chosen to believe Jimenez's allegations instead of the sworn statement of the chief government prosecutor.

Jimenez claimed that he was forced to cough up $2 million after Perez threatened him at his home in Forbes Park in Makati City shortly after Estrada was ousted in January 2001.

The threat came after Jimenez refused to execute an affidavit against cronies of Estrada, which was to have been used against them if they did not support President Macapagal-Arroyo in the 2004 presidential election.

Power deal

Estrada said Jimenez had given Perez $2 million for the approval of the $470-million contract to rehabilitate and expand a power plant in Laguna won by an Argentine firm, Industrias Metalurgicas Pescarmona Sociedad Anonima (Impsa).

But Jimenez said the $2 million was not related to the Impsa deal.

Estrada's spokesperson Rufus Rodriguez said the contract was given the go-signal by Ms Arroyo after Perez issued a legal opinion on the contract two days after Estrada left Malacañang on Jan. 20, 2001.

Last week, Jimenez cleared Ms Arroyo of involvement in the payoff, saying Perez extorted money from him on his own.

Go back to law books

Assistant Ombudsman Mark Jalandoni was quoted as saying that because there was no series of illegal transactions, the requirements for the filing of a plunder charge was not complied with even if the amount involved was double the plunder threshold of P50 million.

At that time, $2 million was worth more than P100 million.

"They should go back to their law books," said former Solicitor General Frank Chavez who, based on the same $2-million payoff, filed a complaint of plunder and money laundering against Perez with the Office of the Ombudsman.

"Even if it's just a one-time deal, if it satisfies all the requirements (for a plunder), the case should be plunder," Chavez told the INQUIRER.

In 2003, Chavez filed plunder and money laundering charges against Perez in connection with the payoff.

Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

The Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) announces that the following are candidates for the position of **ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE COURT OF APPEALS** which was vacated by Hon. Eliezer R. De los Santos whose permanent and total disability retirement was approved by the Supreme Court effective 31 December 2006:

1. **AYSON, RUBEN C.**
2. **ALIM, ROSE MARY M.**
3. **BARRIOS, MANUEL M.**
4. **CRUZ, RAMON A.**
5. **CUEVA, EULOGIA MAKABENTA**
6. **DELOS SANTOS, EDGARDO L.**
7. **DIAMANTE, FRANCHITO N.**
8. **DUMDUM, SIMEON P. JR.**
9. **FRUELDA, CARMELITA GUTIERREZ**
10. **GENILO, LITA S. TOLENTINO**
11. **HERRERA, OSCAR C. JR.**
12. **INFANTE, AMELIA TRIA**
13. **LLOREN, EDGARDO T.**
14. **NIEVES, WILFREDO T.**
15. **PAREDES, MEINRADO P.**
16. **PAREDES, VICTORIA ISABEL A.**
17. **PAUIG, VILMA T.**
18. **SALVADOR FE Q. PALMIANO**
19. **SORONGON, EDWIN D.**
20. **YBAÑEZ, ELIHU A.**
21. **ZALAMEDA, RODIL V.**

Any information, written report, sworn complaint or opposition against any of the aforesaid candidates must be submitted on or before January 26, 2007 to the JBC Secretariat, 2nd Floor, Centennial Bldg., P. Faura, Manila (Tel. No. 552-9512 Fax No. 552-9598; Email address: jbc@supremecourt.gov.ph; jbc_supremecourt@yahoo.com.ph).

January 16, 2007.

MLDVillarama
(Sgd.) **MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA**
Clerk of Court &
Ex Officio Secretary

(PDI - Jan. 17, 2007)

E-mail: pr_provincial_news@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Lost but not forgotten lighthouse

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the fifth and last of a series of reports on lighthouses in Northern Luzon. The Inquirer Northern Luzon is featuring these century-old structures to highlight their importance to the country's northern sea lanes and call attention to their neglect.

By Melvin Gascon
Aparri, Cagayan

IT WAS A SUNNY MORNING IN Linao village in Aparri, Cagayan, but a pall of gloom seemed to embrace the faces of a group of men in the hall as they milled around Edilberto Arellano, 62, as he viewed old, tattered photographs of a lighthouse he keeps.

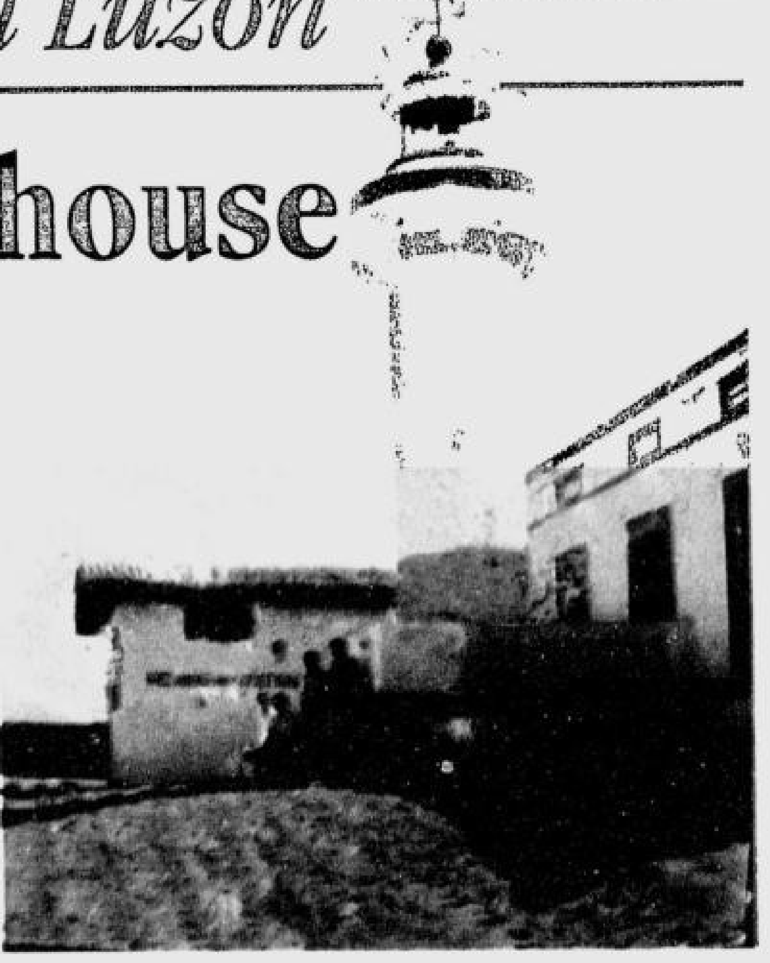
"That is the room where I and my siblings used to sleep," recalled fisherman Ronald Reyes, whose father Mario was a lighthouse keeper in the 1970s. He was showing a sepia photo of the lighthouse pavilion, which served as quarters for its personnel.

Everybody nodded. The photographs reminded the men of Linao (pop: 2,300) the sad reality of what their village and its people may have lost forever: The Linao Point lighthouse in the sub-village of Oma.

Village pride

Built in 1896, the lighthouse, which, for almost 100 years, was Linao's pride and symbol as it guarded the western side of the entrance of the Cagayan River delta in Aparri, the northernmost town of Luzon mainland.

It was listed as one of the 27 major lighthouses in the country by "Faros Españoles de Ultramar," a book about lighthouses built by the Spanish government in its former colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. The book was published in Spain.



THE LINAO Point Lighthouse's 30-foot tower in Aparri, Cagayan, is shown in this digitally enhanced photo preserved by the family of one of its deceased keepers. PHOTO REPRODUCED BY MELVIN GASCON

The forces of nature, as well as neglect by government agencies tasked with taking care of it, have taken their toll on the lighthouse.

Since the late 1980s, Arellano said he and other personnel, as well as residents, watched helplessly as one typhoon after another brought huge waves and swelling tides that washed off the lighthouse and the houses around it.

The complex, with its 9-meter (30-foot) metal tower, the main pavilion and two service buildings have been destroyed. What remain are just pieces of concrete rubble jutting out of the sea, 20 meters from the coastline.

Full of life

But the local folk's memories remain full of life. Their sense of endearment is evident, for they have a story to tell about how the century-old structure became part of their lives.

Almost all families in Linao are descendants of Filipino workers who had toiled for years building the lighthouse, under the "*polo*" or forced labor system imposed by Spaniards.

For almost 100 years, the facility was home to families of four keepers who were assigned by the Philippine Navy to maintain its upkeep.

"Lighthouse keepers then received almost everything we needed from the government, including food rations—more than what we receive today in the form of the P1,000 cost-of-living allowance," said Arellano. He and other keepers in the country are under the Aid to Navigation Division of the Philippine Coast Guard.

Before it was destroyed, the lighthouse had been a popular tourist attraction. Visitors came to roam around its premises, scale its tower and view the surrounding countryside, Arellano said.

From the top, one could see the villages along the banks of the Linao River on the south, the Babuyan Channel on the north, and the Aparri town proper and the how the Cagayan River delta "meets the sea" on the east.

The buildings in the complex were structurally similar to other lighthouses built during the same period—like Cape Bojeador in Ilocos Norte and Cape Engaño in Santa Ana, Cagayan. These were constructed out of the same plan, said Arellano.

Originally, the sixth-order Fresnel lens mounted on top of the lighthouse was powered by mercury fed from the base, according to Arellano. The bulb had a rotating ring of triangular prism, which focused light and made it give off the appropriate flashing pattern when sighted from the sea.

The keepers would have to manually wind up the mechanism every four hours, Arellano said.

In the 1980s, the lighthouse evolved. It was later powered by a diesel-fed generator, then by batteries, and then by solar panels that needed little human involvement. The so-called sun-switch automatically switched the lens on or off, depending on the presence of daylight.

Vicente Misador Jr., the village chief, said that while bigger ships no longer used lighthouses as primary navigational aids, they remained an integral part of the lives of Linao and other fishing villages of Aparri.

The lighthouse would still be standing today if only a proposed 200-m seawall had been built to protect the surrounding coastline

Restoration plea

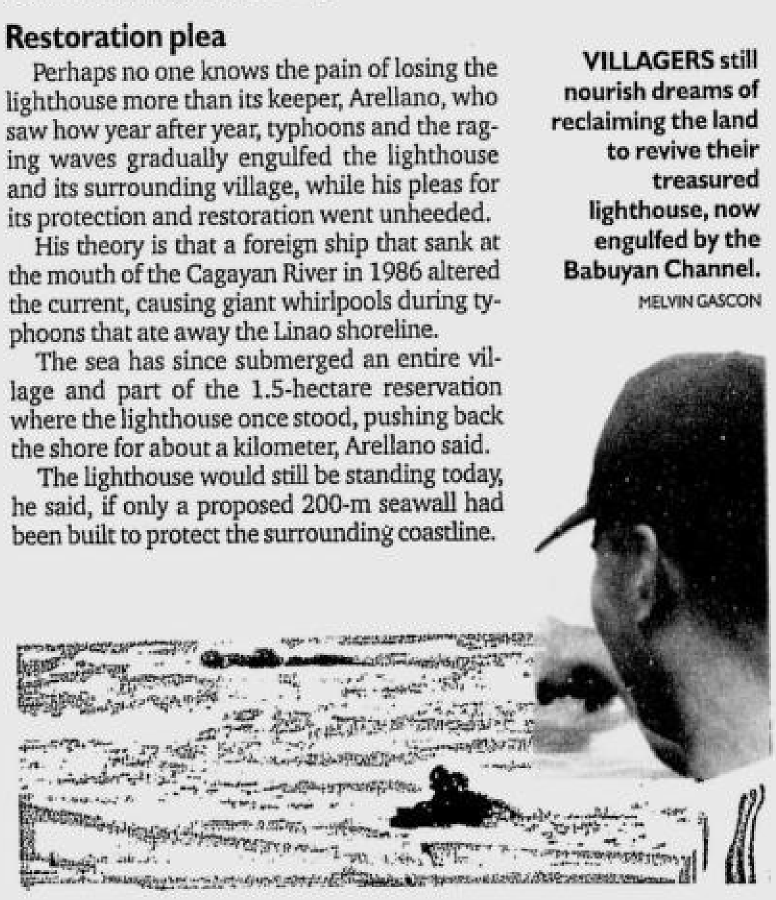
Perhaps no one knows the pain of losing the lighthouse more than its keeper, Arellano, who saw how year after year, typhoons and the raging waves gradually engulfed the lighthouse and its surrounding village, while his pleas for its protection and restoration went unheeded.

His theory is that a foreign ship that sank at the mouth of the Cagayan River in 1986 altered the current, causing giant whirlpools during typhoons that ate away the Linao shoreline.

The sea has since submerged an entire village and part of the 1.5-hectare reservation where the lighthouse once stood, pushing back the shore for about a kilometer, Arellano said.

The lighthouse would still be standing today, he said, if only a proposed 200-m seawall had been built to protect the surrounding coastline.

VILLAGERS still nourish dreams of reclaiming the land to revive their treasured lighthouse, now engulfed by the Babuyan Channel. MELVIN GASCON



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Palace bid to back Lapids rejected

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Efforts by President Macapagal-Arroyo's political adviser to settle the feud between 14 Pampanga mayors and Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid and his son, Gov. Mark Lapid, have failed, according to two mayors present in the meeting at Malacañang on Monday.

CLAUDIO

PINEDA

Gabriel Claudio, presidential adviser for political affairs, got a "flat, uncompromising 'No' from us," Bacolor Mayor Romeo Dungca, vice president of the Pampanga Mayors' League, said when asked what happened in the two-and-half-hour meeting.

Mayors Teddy Tumang of Mexico, Ricardo Rivera of Guagua, Pastor Guiao of Magalang, Darwin Manalansan of Floridablanca, Arthur Salalila of Sta. Rita, Francisco Gaddi of Sta. Ana, Lucas Arceo of Sto. Tomas, Rodrigo Canlas of San Simon, Catalina Bagasina of Sasmuan, Exequiel Gamboa of Porac, Jerry Pelayo of Candaba and Dennis Pineda of Lubao attended the meeting.

Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo, Ms Arroyo's eldest son, and Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao were there, too.

Dungca said the mayors took turns telling Claudio their "grievances" and rejecting reconciliation with the Lapids.

The complaints against the Lapids included the non-convening of the provincial development council, the rejection by the Lapids of the mayors' proposal to accept Pineda as the governor's running mate and take in last-term mayors in the Lakas-CMD's slate for board members, and the fielding of opponents against them.

Pelayo said the mayors also delved on the issues of missing quarry taxes and ghost road projects whose costs were charged twice in the senator's pork barrel funds and the provincial government's development funds.

"Secretary Claudio was shocked at hearing these," Pelayo said by phone. According to him, the mayors presented documents as evidence of the alleged corruption. Claudio, he added, promised to give these to the President for study.

Dungca said Guiao laid out only one condition in renewing alliance with the Lapids: The return of P500 million in missing quarry taxes.

Senator Lapid could not be reached for comment. His aide said the senator was not with him. Fidel Arcenas, the governor's campaign manager and provincial administrator, did not answer the INQUIRER's call to his mobile phone.

Congressman Arroyo did not reply to queries.

Because the differences were "irreconcilable already," the two mayors said Claudio agreed to make the May elections in Pampanga a "*sona libre* (free zone)." *Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon*

Davao electric cooperative told to refund ₱2.1M

DIGOS CITY—THE ENERGY REGulatory Commission (ERC) has ordered the Davao del Sur Electric Cooperative (Dasureco) to refund its consumers at least P2.1 million in overcharges.

In a recent order signed by chair Rodolfo Albano, the ERC said Dasureco had collected more than what it was allowed to from September to December 2004.

During this period, Dasureco's 273,469 consumers had used about 48.5 million kilowatt-hours (KwH) of electricity.

But instead of collecting P3.12 million as indicated in a provisional authority earlier issued by the regulatory body, Dasureco charged its consumers about P5.24 million.

The overcharging occurred when Dasureco implemented the ERC's order for unbundling of rates.

The ERC gave Dasureco six months to return the money, which would be in the form of electric bills credit.

The ERC said based on its assessment, Dasureco has to implement the refund, which is equivalent to 29 centavos per KwH consumed.

Cristeta Roldan, Dasureco legal counsel, said they have already started implementing the order.

Roldan said consumers could expect a reduced bill during the next few months. *Eldie Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao*

Police accused of wanting to revive 'jueteng'

LAOAG CITY—POLICE HAVE been arresting legitimate collectors of the state-run small town lottery because some officials want jueteng back, according to an STL operator in Ilocos Norte.

Martel Quitoriano, general manager of the Lucky Pick Amusement and Development Inc. (LPAD), denied reports that their STL operations were being used as front for the illegal numbers game jueteng.

"Our employees are all wearing their IDs (identification cards), those who are not are the enemies (those collecting jueteng bets)," he said.

He said Criminal Investigation and Detection Group operatives have been raiding STL stations and arresting personnel despite the knowledge that STL was on an experimental basis.

"This is pure harassment. We are trying to introduce a legitimate operation but it seems like our authorities would rather have the old game (jueteng) back because that's the only way they can have their share," Quitoriano said in a telephone interview.

He said the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office granted the LPAD authority to conduct test runs of STL in Ilocos Norte on April 17 last year but actual operations started Nov. 9.

He said his firm would continue dry run operations until they find the best scheme to attract more people to STL.

Quitoriano said LPAD has started remitting the shares of local governments from the company's net sales to the province (5 percent), city (10 percent) and towns (10 percent) through their treasurers.

"The remittances are all covered by receipts. Our collections are minimal compared to (jueteng) because we are still on a test-run basis," he said.

"The STL is just starting to pick up. We cannot establish a legal game easily because people are accustomed to jueteng where there are fewer number combinations and winning chances are higher," he said.

A businesswoman based in Metro Manila owns the LPAD. It has eight betting stations in 18 clustered towns in Ilocos Norte, including this city. *Cristina Arzadon, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

ROUNDUP

Ex-mayor's aide, wife slain

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A security aide of a former Zamboanga Sibugay town mayor and his wife were killed when ambushed in Buug town on Monday afternoon. Senior Supt. Francisco Cristobal, police chief for Zamboanga Sibugay, identified the former security aide as Jesus Logait. Cristobal said Logait was a security aide of former Buug town mayor Eugenio Famor. Famor's wife, Teresita, is the incumbent mayor of the town. Police were looking into personal grudge as motive of the killing. *Inquirer Mindanao*

Falling rock kills Korean

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—A Korean teacher died in an accident at the Pagsanjan Falls in Laguna on Sunday. Supt. Florendo Saligao, public information officer of the Calabarzon police, said Lee Young Sook, 32, teacher and native of Seogon City in South Korea, was riding a boat on the way to the main falls when a rock fell on her head. Saligao said Lee was rushed to the Pagsanjan Medical Hospital but was declared dead on arrival. He said the victim suffered severe head injuries. Police have invited the boat's operators, Joventino Balleber, 60, and Celso Gandia, 34, for questioning. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Fire razes 3 Dumaguete firms

DUMAGUETE CITY—Three business establishments went up in smoke and three others suffered damages after a fire of still unknown origin broke early Monday on Perdices Street corner Silliman Avenue here. FO3 Rico Bandeling placed the damage at P2.5 million. No one was injured in the fire. Bandeling said the fire destroyed the Rosante Restaurant and Marjorie's Boutique at the Marciano Kho Building and the Body and Sole Foot Spa at the Flores Building. Fire trucks from Siaton, Valencia, Sibulan and San Jose towns and Tanjay City, Fil-Chinese Fire Brigade, Albino Solon, and Silliman University helped put out the fire. *Romy Amarado, Inquirer Visayas*

Tribal group backs Chavit

DAVAO CITY—A leader of a large tribal group in Mindanao has called on Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson to join the senatorial race. Datu Gawilan, leader of the Matigsalog tribe in Bukidnon and North Cotabato, said his group has chosen Singson as their candidate for senator because they are convinced he would set aside his own interests and really work for the good of the country and the people. "It is difficult to find men of the same caliber as Singson," he said, citing how the governor stood up against powerful and influential people to help eliminate corruption in the government. Singson was primary witness in the government's plunder cases against former President Joseph Estrada, his former ally. Two other tribal leaders from Mindanao shared Gawilan's statement. "If Governor Singson has won every election with hands down, his charisma will work the same way in the national elections," Gawilan said. *Inquirer Mindanao*

Farmers find WWII bombs

DUPAX DEL SUR, Nueva Vizcaya—Farmers here found on Thursday World War II bombs in Barangay Carolotan as they were preparing their farms for another planting season. Lt. Col. Loreto Magundayao, commander of the Army's 54th Infantry Battalion based here, said soldiers only recovered five of the eight Japanese-made bombs. Magundayao said some villagers took two bombs while another exploded after some residents set it on fire. He asked the villagers to return the bombs. The five recovered bombs were turned over to the Army camp in Gamu, Isabela. *Ben Moses Ebreo, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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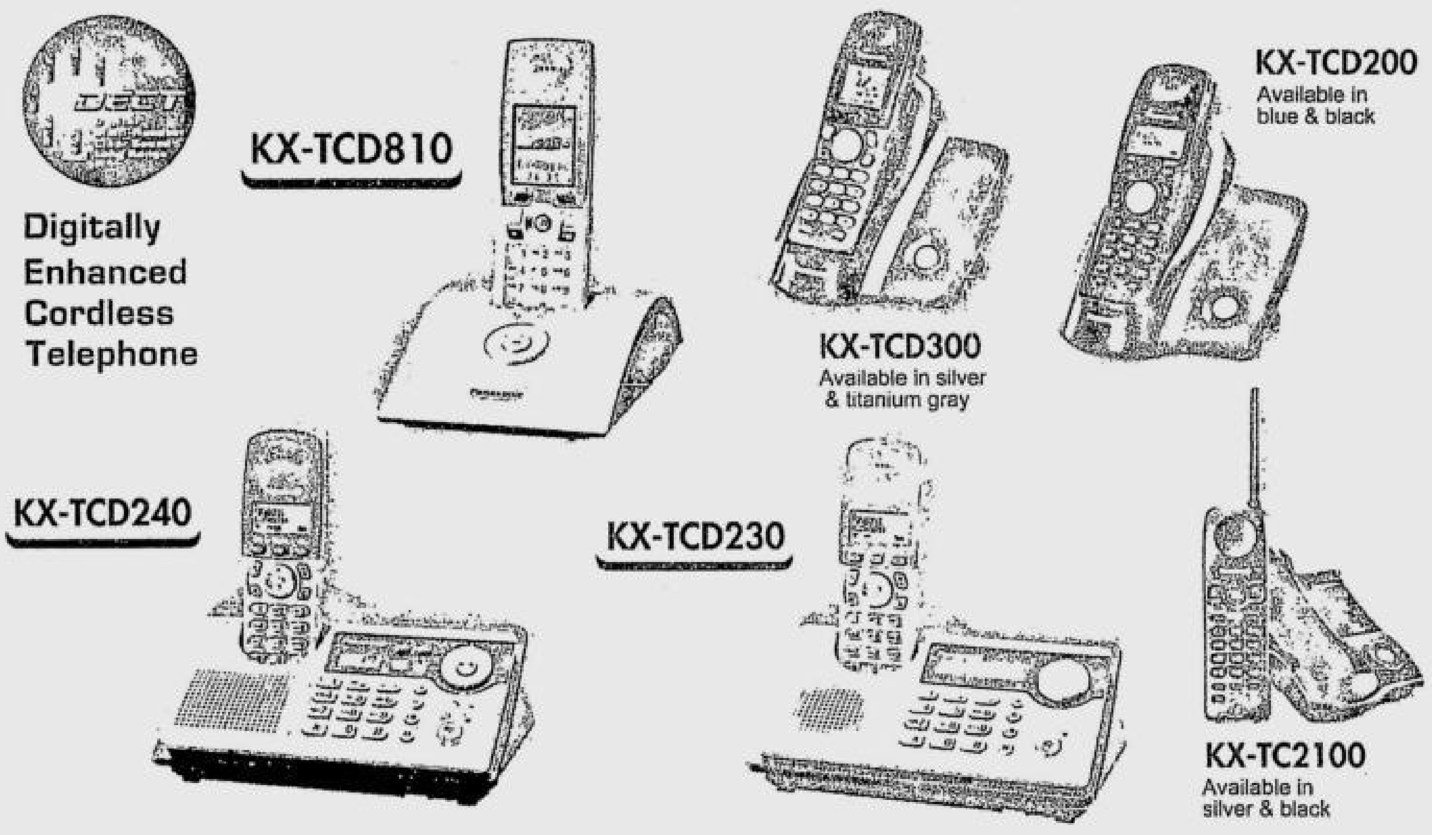
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Cops unfazed by suspect's reversal

By Margaux Ortiz and DJ Yap

THE RETRACTION OF ONE OF THE SUSPECTS in the murder of Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr. and his claim that he was forced into signing a confession will not affect the case, according to National Bureau of Investigation official Ruel Lasala.

Lasala said former Army Sgt. Rufino Panday's reversal was "immaterial" as he did not make the retraction during the inquest proceedings.

"His extrajudicial confession has now become part of the court's records," said Lasala, director of the NBI's NCR office and a member of Task Force Bersamin.

Lasala said there were independent witnesses who identified Panday and Freddie Dupo as the "lookouts" during the Dec. 16 killing of Bersamin and his bodyguard on the grounds of the Mt. Carmel Church in Quezon City.

He said the same witnesses pointed to suspects Dominador Barbosa and Sonny Taculao as the assailant and the backup gunman, respectively.

Too late

"His recantation came too late. It is now up to the court to decide if his confession will be admissible or not," Lasala said.

In a radio interview on Monday, Panday said he was forced into signing the confession and denied that he had served as a lookout or pointed to Abra Gov. Vicente Valera as the alleged mastermind.

He claimed he was not in Metro Manila at the time of the crime. He also said that the Abra governor was not involved in the Bersamin murder.

Lasala noted that it was "normal in any investigation for a suspect to blame or accuse investigators of coercing him whenever he retracts his original statement."

Yesterday, Panday filed with the Quezon City regional trial court an affidavit retracting his alleged confession.

In it, Panday categorically denied any knowledge of the murder and accused officers from the criminal investigation unit (CIU) of the Quezon City Police District led by Supt. Franklin Mabanag of having threatened him with torture and death if he did not sign the confession.

He said Mabanag at one point threatened to kill his entire family. The police officer also allegedly told him he would wrap his head in a plastic bag and subject him to electric shocks.

Panday said that when he was taken to the inquest proceedings on Dec. 22, Mabanag allegedly repeated the threats if Panday should embarrass the investigators before the prosecutor and the media.

His wife, Concepcion, claimed that her husband agreed to submit to questioning after the Bersamin murder for fear that he could be implicated if he refused the police invitations.

But every time he went to Mabanag's office at the CIU, he would be afraid that he might not be returned to his cell, Concepcion said.

Mabanag dismissed the claims of torture and coercion, saying Panday's allegations were "absurd."

"We expected Panday to recant his statement early on. A case like this has precedents," he said.

Like Lasala, Mabanag said the retraction would not affect the case.

If anything, he said Panday could be charged with perjury. *With a report from Miko Morelos*

Valera has P5-M fund for media, police claim

By Alcuin Papa

ABRA GOV. VICENTE VALERA HAS PUT UP A P5 million fund for a media campaign to "kill" stories linking him to the killing of Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin, police officials said yesterday.

"We have heard that Gov. Valera withdrew P5 million for a media campaign," said Director Edgardo Doromal, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG).

Doromal said it was Valera's wife who withdrew the amount from a bank whose name was not disclosed.

A senior police officer said the campaign's "operator" was a former reporter for a broadsheet.

The source said Valera's media operator had approached the two top TV networks with a P500,000 offer to "kill" stories about Valera and his alleged involvement in the Bersamin murder.

The networks reportedly turned down the offer.

Not funny

Doromal yesterday jokingly asked police reporters if anyone had received anything from the P5 million pot.

Unfortunately, the joke did not sit well with reporters covering the Philippine National Police.

"That was tactless, plain and simple," said dzBB radio reporter Weng Salvaccion.

"That comment was unfair. If that P5 million media campaign is true, no one can generalize. Not all reporters can be blinded by money," said Thea Alberto of Inquirer.net.

Nilo Marasigan, president of the PNP Press Corps, said it was entirely possible Valera would have that much to spend on a media campaign.

"He has a lot of money. But a media campaign would be insulting to working journalists," he said.

Doromal said that Valera had hired lawyer Galileo Angeles to represent witness Rufino Panday, a former Army soldier who confessed to acting as a look-out during the Dec. 16 killing of Bersamin but then recanted his confession last Monday.

Coerced

He said police have also received unconfirmed reports that Valera had coerced and offered Panday and his family money in exchange for his retraction.

In his earlier confession, Panday said that Freddie Dupo, one of the prime suspects in the Bersamin murder, had told him that Valera had allegedly put out a P5 million contract on Bersamin. On Monday, Panday said Valera was not involved.

Doromal said that while the sudden turnaround of Panday was surprising, the police had "enough information" to solve the case and it would be "up to the courts if they will give weight" to the recantation.

He said police have investigated Panday's allegations against Quezon City Police Supt. Franklin Mabanag and Insp. Roberto Razon.

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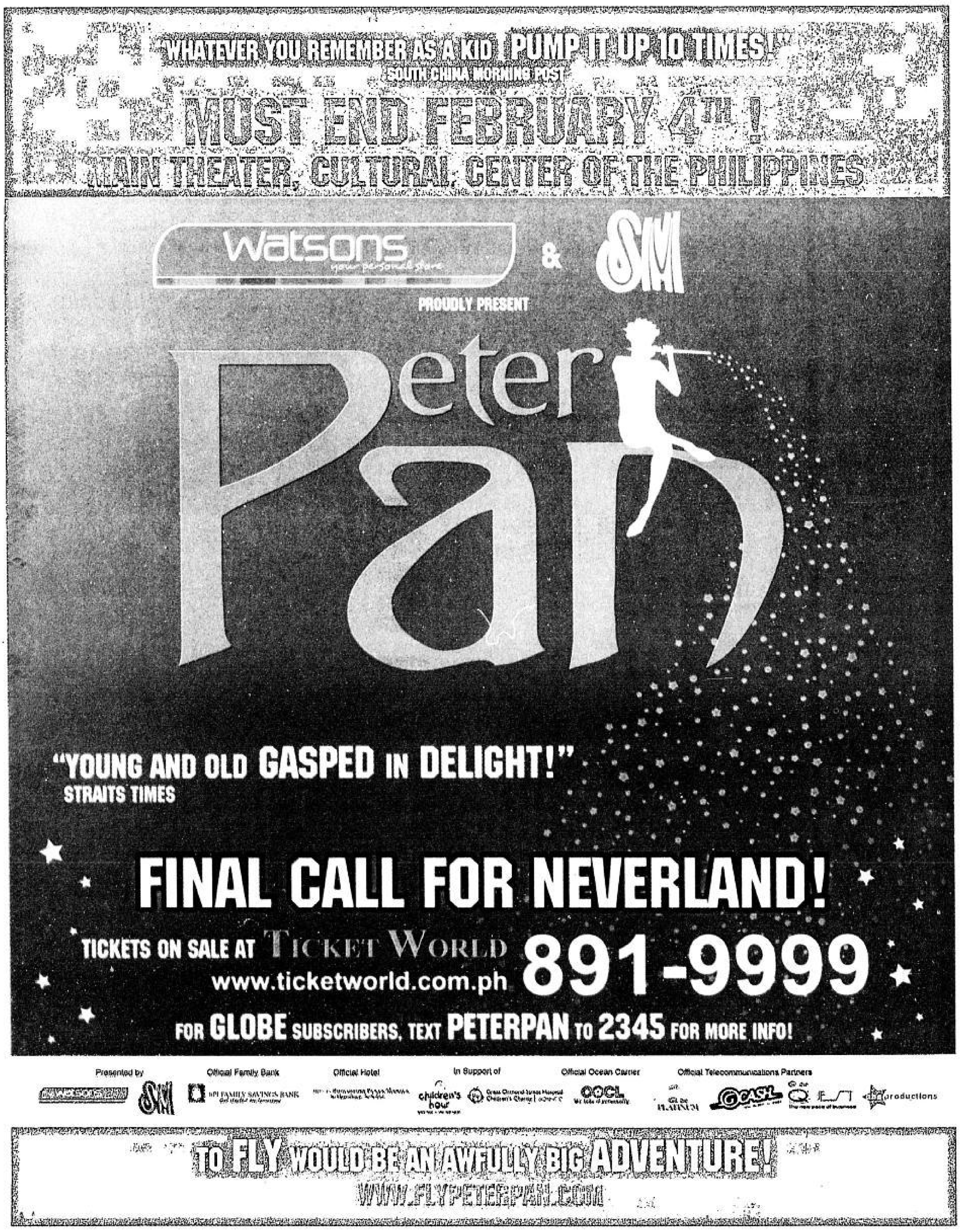
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Slain Leviste aide's kin want 2nd autopsy

Treachery evident in slay, says lawyer

By Margaux C. Ortiz and Tarra Quismundo

THE CHILDREN OF RAFAEL DE LAS Alas want his body to be autopsied a second time to let the public know the type of wounds the longtime aide of former Batangas Gov. Antonio "Tony" Leviste had sustained, according to the family lawyer.

"We will invite the media to witness the autopsy," lawyer Joven Lorenzo, counsel of De las Alas' daughter Dinna Sanchez, said in an interview.

He stressed that the medico-legal examination on De las Alas showed that "treachery was evident" in the killing of the victim.

De las Alas was shot dead by Leviste last Friday inside the LPL Towers on Legaspi Street in Makati City. The former Batangas governor later surrendered to the police at the Makati Medical Center and admitted that he shot the victim in self-defense.

"Why did he have a gunshot wound at the back of his head?" Lorenzo asked, adding that the autopsy report released by the police also showed that it was an entry wound. He said that even if Leviste shot De las Alas in the face first before shooting him in the back of the head, he could still be held liable for murder.

"The qualifying circumstance of ignominy would be present in that particular scenario," Lorenzo said.

"It would not have been necessary (for him to shoot De las Alas in the back of his head)," he added.

According to the lawyer, a fifth wound on the victim's forearm suggested that he was "trying to deflect something during the incident."

"The medico-legal report speaks for itself. Any claim of self-defense on the part of the suspect will be contrary to the physical evidence," the lawyer said.

Lorenzo added that he and the De las Alas family are now waiting for the actual information that would be filed before the court.

The police on Monday filed homicide charges against Leviste in the Makati prosecutor's office. Second Assistant City Prosecutor Henry Salazar told the INQUIRER that the case was "still under study."

The other day, De las Alas' family asked the National Bureau of Investigation to conduct a parallel probe of their father's death, saying they were unhappy with the way the Makati police were conducting the investigation.

Leviste's lawyer, meanwhile, welcomed the move.

"That's their right. They just want to make sure that things are in order," Henry Capela said.

Another lawyer, Alex Avisado, said they would prove that Leviste acted in self-defense.

"The shooting was a spur of the moment move. If he had wanted De las Alas dead, he would not have done it himself. He would have hired somebody to do that. If the case goes to court, we will pursue our line of self-defense, and the burden of proof is on us," Avisado said.

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People's groups hit soldiers' presence in Metro barangays

By DJ Yap

SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN SIGHTED in a number of barangays in Quezon City and parts of Metro Manila, and the deployment is a purported attempt to flush out activist leaders, an urban poor group said.

For the past two months, Army troops have camped out at the halls of densely populated barangays in the Metro to "harass" militant leaders there, said Ed Legson of the Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay). "They've been knocking on the doors of residents to ask questions about the activities of organizers in the area. They keep asking about members of Anakpawis, Gabriela, and other groups," he added. Legson said the military detachments were posted at Barangays Holy Spirit, Payatas, Batasan Hills, Commonwealth, and Bagong Silangan in Quezon City, as well as Pandacan, Sta. Mesa, and Tondo districts in Manila.

Kadamay and Anakpawis leaders who held a dialogue with the military detachment in Barangay Commonwealth yesterday said they were told that they were in the area to provide basic services. But Legson said they had yet to see evidence of the "services."

RESIDENTS of several barangays in Quezon City and Manila are wary about the presence of soldiers in their communities, despite assurances that the men in uniform were deployed in the area to deliver basic services, like watching out for criminal elements. JOAN BONDOC

MetroBriefs

Man arrested for drugs in Pasig

POLICEMEN arrested a man suspected of selling drugs in Pasig City on Monday. Melchor Cruz, 47, was arrested in his house in Barangay Bambang, Pasig City with P40,000 worth of suspected shabu. Senior Supt. Francisco Uyami, Pasig police chief, said that his men monitored Cruz's movements following a tip from his neighbors about his alleged illegal activities. Seized from Cruz were seven sachets containing suspected shabu and drug paraphernalia. The suspect will be charged with the sale and possession of illegal drugs.

Emman Cena

La Salle 2007 alumni homecoming

THE SILVER Jubilarian Class of 1982—with co-host batches 1972, 1977, 1987, 1992, 1997, and 2002 of the La Salle Green Hills Alumni Association—presents the 2007 alumni homecoming dubbed "AKO ... LaSalleLIGHT: Verde Inside." The affair will held on Feb. 3 at the LSGH Grounds, Ortigas Avenue in Mandaluyong City. Registration starts at 3 p.m. For details, please contact the LSGHAA offices at 7212729 or 7254720. Proceeds from the affair will go to the Bahay Pag-Asa Youth Center and the Youth at Risk Projects of the De La Salle Brothers.

2 Pasay councilors turn state witness, reinstated

By Jocelyn R. Uy

TWO PASAY CITY COUNCILORS who were suspended last September with Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad, Vice Mayor Antonino Calixto and eight other councilors were reinstated on Monday.

Councilors Generoso Cuneta and his wife, Ma. Antonia, reclaimed their old posts after they were granted immunity by the Office of the Ombudsman in exchange for turning state witness in the graft case filed against Trinidad and the other officials.

The Cunetas were considered the least guilty parties in the case as they were not part of the bid and awards committee that approved the allegedly anomalous garbage contracts that were the basis for the filing of the graft case against the suspended officials.

Although Trinidad's camp accused the couple of betrayal and being turncoats, the Cunetas said they merely acted according to their conscience.

"They think that we have turned our backs on them. But we just wanted to come out with the truth. We just could not take it anymore," Antonia said in an interview.

The Ombudsman last Friday ordered the dismissal from government service of Trinidad, Calixto and the eight remaining councilors for entering into the P232-million garbage collection contracts without conducting a public bidding.

Before the order was handed down, Trinidad and the other officials, including the Cunetas, had been serving a six-month suspension that began last September. On Monday, Trinidad, Calixto and some councilors went to City Hall to demand that they be reinstated.

Their consultant, former Sen. Rene Saguisag, said the dismissal order, in effect, negated the suspension order issued against the mayor and the other officials. The Department of Interior and Local Government, however, swore in acting Mayor Allan Panaligan as the city's chief executive in a permanent capacity.

According to Antonia, she and her husband made the offer to turn state witness on Sept. 21, two weeks after they received the order for their suspension.

"I'm ready to face all the consequences and only time will tell if we did the right thing or not," she said. According to her, she and her husband have been charged with perjury by Trinidad.

Antonia also claimed they have been getting death threats. "We don't know where they come from. It's best to keep quiet, go through the process and face the music," she said, adding that she was still with Trinidad's party, the Partido ng Masang Pilipino.

Did You Know

THE LATEST figures from the National Statistics Office (2003 data) show that a family living in Metro Manila has an average annual income of P274,529 and an average annual expenditure of P225,936.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Cheap courses for Munti studes

By Julie M. Aurelio

FOR ONLY A FEW HUNDRED PESOS, a resident of Muntinlupa City can study high-speed sewing, dressmaking, cosmetology and cellular phone repair at this government-run school.

And it takes only six months for a student to finish a course, earn a certificate of completion and find work at one of several companies based in the city.

Schooling at the Muntinlupa City Technical Institute (MCTI) is an attractive proposition to many students since they only have to pay a participation fee of P300 to P500 to be able to enroll. The city government shoulders the rest of the expenses.

The school is the city government's answer to the rising unemployment rate and access to education of its cash-strapped citizens.

Tez Navarro, the city's public information officer, said most of the enrollees are students who had to drop out of school because of poverty. Others are people who never had a chance at acquiring an education.

The school, which is accredited by the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda), also accepts older enrollees, some of them professionals who want to learn a new trade and earn extra.

From a small manpower-training center in Barangay Putatan, Alabang, the MCTI earned the reputation of being a venue for second chances.

City Mayor Jaime Fresnedi oversaw the inauguration of the MCTI in March 2005, seeing it as a viable alternative to a college education. "It takes four years to finish a college degree. But here, you finish a technical-vocational course in six months. And you can find work with that as well," Fresnedi told the INQUIRER.

Navarro added that the graduates have a better fighting chance of finding jobs within Muntinlupa, as MCTI has tie-ups with companies based in the city.

A city ordinance requires that 70% of the manpower of a Muntinlupa-based company should be made up of city residents.

In December 2006, 800 trainees comprised the 80th batch of students to graduate from the MCTI, both from so-called "hard trade" and "soft trade" courses.

According to institute director Danny Austria, the soft trade courses include dressmaking, paper craft, food processing, cosmetology, reflexology, high-speed sewing, among others. Some of the hard trade courses are automotive, and hotel and restaurant services.

Fresnedi stressed that the trainees' chances of going abroad are increased with vocational education courses.

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines
Bidding for the Contract for the Construction of Ramps in Tarlac

The Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA), through the BCDA 2007 Corporate Funds, intends to apply the sum of **One Hundred Million One Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Four and 75/100 (P100,001,254.75)** for the projects listed hereunder, being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The Services shall be for the Contract for the Construction of Ramps/Approaches in Tarlac. The works shall include, but not limited to the following:

Construction of Ramps/Approaches for the following overpasses in Tarlac:

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- Pitabunan Overpass
- Mabilog Overpass- Luisita I
- Pando Overpass – Luisita II
- Ligaya II Overpass
- Ligaya III Overpass (Maligaya) and
- Sta. Maria Overpass

BCDA now calls for the submission of Letters of Intent (LOIs) from potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the bidding for Construction of the aforecited Project. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, **at least A, Medium B**, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least fifty percent (50%) of the ABC, and meet the other minimum eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Documents. Interested Applicants must submit their LOIs during the issuance date of Eligibility documents on **January 23-30, 2007** only and obtain the Application for Eligibility and to Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: Twenty Thousand (P20,000.00)** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The last day for the submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on. **09 February 2007 at 11:00 a.m.** and the Opening of Eligibility Documents at **1:30 p.m of the same date** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. **Late submission of Eligibility Documents shall be accepted only for recording purposes but will not be considered and will be returned unopened.** Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act No. 9184 (RA 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted, unless otherwise stated, to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, only Bids from eligible Bidders will be opened. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, a contract will only be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder who was determined as such during post-qualification.

Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from BCDA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below **from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on 17-23 January 2007.**

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the SBAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Pesos: Fifty Thousand (P50,000.00)**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the Bidder or his authorized representative **from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on 16-20 February 2007.**

BCDA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on **27 February 2007, 10:00AM** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City.

Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the address below on or before **11:00 a.m. of 12 March 2007**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form:

a. Cash, managers check, cashiers' check, irrevocable letter of credit, or bank draft – one percent (1%) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.
b. Bank Guarantee – one and a half percent (1½ %) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.
c. Surety Bond from a reputable insurance company accredited by the Insurance Commission – two and a half percent (2½ %) of the Approved Budget for the Contract.

Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on **12 March 2007 at 1:30 p.m.** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st St. Crescent Park West, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below on the same day.

Completion of the Works is required by a total of **One Hundred Eighty (180) calendar days**.

BCDA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Further information may be obtained from Ms. Nancy Paje, of SBAC Secretariat.

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Chairman
Special Bids and Award Committee (SBAC)

(PDI - Jan. 17 & 23, 2007)

Alleged slain car hijack suspect could be Roldan state witness

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE FATHER OF THE BOY ALLEGEDLY kidnapped by actor and former Congressman Dennis Roldan yesterday said he would continue seeking justice for his son.

Roger Yu reiterated his appeal amid reports that the suspect turned state witness against Roldan was killed in an alleged shootout with policemen in Quezon City six days ago.

"We will not stop in our pursuit for justice for what they have done to my son so that other victims will not be afraid to come out and fight," Yu told the INQUIRER yesterday. Roldan is accused of masterminding the kidnapping of Yu's 3-year-old son in February 2005.

He has been out of jail in the last six months after Pasig City Regional Trial Court Branch 261 Judge Agnes Reyes-Carpio granted him bail, saying evidence against him so far in the trial was weak.

There were reports that Alberto Pagdanganan—who had testified that he accepted instructions and funds directly from Roldan for the kidnapping—was among the three suspected car thieves killed in a shootout.

Quezon City Police District director Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula told the INQUIRER that a certain Alberto Naguit was among those killed.

He added that he was not sure if Naguit was Pagdanganan, as claimed in television reports. Yu, however, said he has received reports confirming Pagdanganan's death. But he was confident the incident would not affect the case since the suspect turned state witness had already testified against Roldan.

Security measures in place for Sto. Niño fete in Tondo

By Tina G. Santos

MANILA POLICEMEN YESTERDAY ASSURED Tondo residents that strict security measures would be implemented to ensure peace as they celebrate the feast of the Sto. Niño during the weekend.

At the same time, however, Senior Supt. Danilo Abarzosa, acting Manila Police District chief, urged revelers to do their part in making the event safe by keeping their tempers in check.

He said people should avoid losing their cool to prevent bloody incidents that usually mar the celebration.

"Let's keep our cool," Abarzosa said, stressing that most of the bloody incidents that marred the celebration in previous years were caused by heated arguments during drinking sessions.

Abarzosa added that the police would also keep a tight watch on "Lakbayaw," a procession of devotees dancing on the streets while carrying images of the Child Jesus.

The Filipinos' devotion to the Santo Niño can be traced back to 1521 when Portuguese navigator Ferdinand Magellan landed in Cebu and presented the image as a gift to Queen Juana and King Humabon.

When the Spaniards returned to the islands in 1565, they found the icon still intact and venerated by the people.

2 traders robbed in QC

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

ARMED MEN WHO HELD UP two businessmen yesterday apparently knew their victims had just withdrawn P550,000 in cash from a bank.

PO3 Rogelio Baltazar told the INQUIRER that businessman Ricky Reinares, 49, had accompanied his friend, Velmor de Rona, 27, to the Metrobank branch on Katipunan Road in Quezon City.

De Rona, who owns a health care center, then withdrew money intended for his company.

The two men then got into Reinares' car and were driving towards Makati City when they got stuck in traffic on the busy flyover on C5 Road in Barangay Bagong Ilog, Pasig City.

Fear factor

Seconds later, two men alighted from a motorcycle, approached their vehicle and shot one of the front tires.

Out of fear, the two businessmen opened the doors of their car.

One of the robbers specifically asked for the brown envelope where De Rona put the bulk of the cash he had withdrawn from the bank.

The police said the robbers could have an accomplice inside the bank since they knew exactly where the victim put the money.

A MAN brushes snow from his car along West Washington Avenue in Madison, Wis. Jan. 15, during a snowstorm which began Sunday night. AP

Ice storms hit US states; 29 killed

CHICAGO—A MASSIVE WINTER storm moved eastward across the central US Monday bringing snow, sleet, ice and flash floods, killing at least 29 people and prompting President George W. Bush to declare an emergency in Oklahoma state.

Since Friday, weather-related road accidents killed 14 people in Oklahoma, including seven in a minivan crash Sunday, while 103,000 people were without power, state authorities said Monday.

Bush declared an emergency in the central state. The Federal Emergency Management Agency began distributing generators and bottled water to communities hit by the ice storm, said the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management.

The state of Missouri said the weather claimed eight lives, with traffic accidents caused by slick conditions killing seven and one dying from carbon monoxide poisoning, a common cause of death when those without power use fuel-burning stoves to heat their homes.

More than 300,000 people lost power in Missouri due to downed power lines, the state reported Sunday. One line worker was injured when he fell from a utility pole.

In Kansas, five people were reported killed in weather-related traffic accidents and one person was poisoned by carbon monoxide exposure, said state officials quoted by the Kansas City Star newspaper.

One person died in a weather-related traffic accident in New York state, according to WGY radio.

In Texas to the south, the governor called out the National Guard after more than six inches of rain caused flash flooding and dramatic high-water rescues.

The National Weather Service issued flood warnings and advisories in several states, from Louisiana to Ohio and Illinois. An ice storm warning was posted for parts of the northeastern states of New Hampshire and Maine.

Record-breaking cold weather even hit the Pacific Coast state of California, where mild temperatures usually prevail all year.

In central Los Angeles, the thermometer dropped to 2.0 degrees Celsius (36 Fahrenheit) Monday morning, a record-setting temperature not felt in the city for 75 years.

Farmers in the Central Valley and the southern part of the state worried about freezing temperatures ruining the lucrative citrus crop, the Los Angeles Times and other media reported.

Photographs showed icicles hanging off of tangerine trees in a Central Valley orchard near Fresno, a rare sight in the state.

California oranges, lemons and other produce worth as much as half a billion dollars were likely ruined, the Los Angeles Times reported Monday, citing an industry spokesperson.

The storm in central states was moving eastward, and has already caused ice storms in western parts of New York state, forecasters said. It was expected to cause less trouble as it crosses the northeast New England region, according to the National Weather Service.

"Things are improving but it's cold," National Weather Service meteorologist Bruce Sullivan told AFP.

The Midwest will get a break from the weather, Sullivan said, followed by a dusting of snow.

"That will usher in a lot colder air, and a 'lake effect' from the Great Lakes," in which cold air passing over the lakes picks up moisture and dumps snow on surrounding areas, he said.

Parts of Colorado got up to half a meter of snow while up to eight centimeters of sleet were reported in Illinois, Kansas and Missouri, Romano said. Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma and Missouri got 2.5 cm or more of freezing rain.

North of the border, eastern Canada was finally hit by the first snow storm of the winter after an unusually mild start to the season. The weather forced 50 flight cancellations and 80 delays at Montreal and Toronto airports. *AFP*

THAKSIN

Thaksin appeals for return to democracy

BANGKOK—OUSTED THAI Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra appealed for a return to democracy in an interview published Tuesday, warning that the public would not tolerate Military rule in the kingdom for long.

Overthrown in a bloodless putsch on Sept. 19, the ex-premier told the Wall Street Journal Asia that democracy "is in the blood of the Thais." In a wide-ranging interview, Thaksin also criticized the Military-installed government's economic policies and denied any involvement in deadly New Year's Eve blasts which killed three people.

"We have tasted democracy, and we believe in democracy. So it's time for Thailand to restore democracy as soon as possible," he said in the interview, published in the newspaper and on the Wall Street Journal website.

"Democracy is in the blood of the Thais. They can tolerate (a non-elected government) for a period of time—one year, one year and half —but then the return of democracy is necessary." The ruling junta has pledged elections and a return to democracy by the end of this year.

In an interview peppered with references to democracy, Thaksin pointed to Thailand's battered international standing. Its diplomatic relations have been strained since the coup, with the United States and Europe leading calls for the lifting of martial law and an accelerated return to democratic rule.

"If you aren't a democratic country, then it is very difficult to deal with other countries. Even ministers cannot meet with other (countries') ministers. You cannot meet ministers from the US," he said.

"You can't do business with the rest of the world." Thaksin, a 57-year-old billionaire businessman, criticized the government's economic policy.

The Thai stock market plummeted a record 15 percent in December after the Bank of Thailand announced draconian capital control measures aimed at halting the rise in the country's soaring currency. *AFP*

Ancient city found in Syria

CHICAGO—IT WAS THE ANcient version of a last stand: Twelve clay bullets lined up and ready to be shot from slings in a desperate attempt to stop fierce invaders who soon would reduce much of the city to rubble.

The discovery was made in the ruins of Hamoukar, an ancient settlement in northeastern Syria located just kilometers from the border with Iraq.

Thought to be one of the world's earliest cities and located in northern Mesopotamia between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, it is the site of joint excavations by the University of Chicago and the Syrian Department of Antiquities.

Excavations have been going on at the site since 1999, but in digs conducted this past fall, researchers uncovered new evidence of the city's end and more clues as to how urban life there may have begun. The University of Chicago was to announce the findings Tuesday.

The site is so close to Iraq that Clemens Reichel, the American co-director of the expedition, has seen explosions on the other side of the border.

"It's somewhat surreal. We're not living in a vacuum there. We know exactly what's happening across the border," Reichel said. "But working in Syria is like working in the eye of the storm. It's very peaceful to work there. Practically no problems."

The site was anything but peaceful in approximately 3,500 B.C. The archaeologists have previously detailed how they believe Hamoukar's independence was ended by a battle that caused its buildings and walls to collapse and burn.

This past fall the team found more traces of that battle. For example, there was a shallow pit containing a water basin normally used to soften clay sealings for reuse. The clay sealings were used on bags, jars and baskets, helping guarantee the valuables or food inside had not been tampered with.

But along this basin, the researchers found neatly lined up along its edge 12 "sling bullets," oval-shaped weapons made of clay that were fired using slings. (More than 1,000 of the bullets were found in debris of collapsed walls in 2005.)

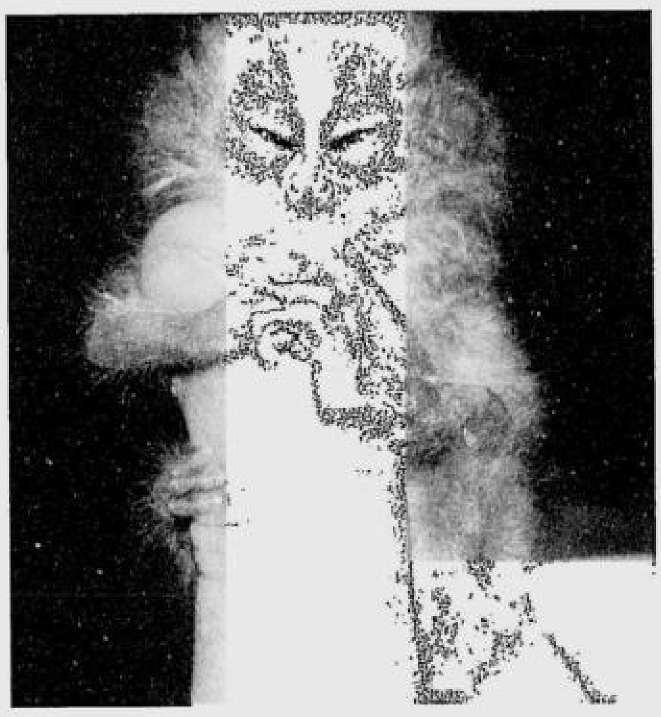
Reichel theorizes someone who usually worked with the clay sealings was trying to contribute to the war effort and fashioned bullets from the clay instead.

"You imagine the despair the people were in. They were using everything they could to throw back at the attacker," he said. "It looks like a desperate last attempt."

But the roof collapsed before the bullets could be used, and the researchers believe they were the first to see the scene since that fateful day.

"It's the content of 5,500 years ago no one has seen. There's an element of eeriness—almost a sacred element—when you do this," said Reichel, a research associate at the university's Oriental Institute.

As for the identity of the invaders, the researchers point to debris that indicates if members of the Uruk culture of southern Mesopotamia were not the ones attacking, they certainly swooped in immediately afterward and took over the city. *AP*



ENDANGERED
A baby Slender Loris is seen in this image released by the Zoological Society of London. Scientists launched a bid on Tuesday to save some of the world's rarest and most neglected creatures from extinction, including a venomous shrew-like creature, an egg-laying mammal and the world's smallest bat. REUTERS

CASTRO AFP

Failed operations leave Castro in serious condition

MADRID—AILING CUBAN leader Fidel Castro is in "very serious" condition after three failed operations for mounting intestinal problems, the Spanish newspaper El Pais reported.

The El Pais website quoted medical sources at the Gregorio Maranon hospital in Madrid, from where a doctor traveled to Havana last month to examine the 80-year-old revolutionary. Castro has not been seen in public since being taken ill in July.

The communist government in Havana treats the leader's health like a state secret and the hospital would not comment on the new report.

But there has been mounting speculation in recent weeks over the condition of Castro. Last week, the office of John Negroponte, the outgoing director of US intelligence, said Castro was "terminally ill" and may have only days to live.

El Pais said the Cuban leader is suffering from a "serious infection of the large intestine following three failed operations and various complications that have degenerated into peritonitis." Peritonitis is a potentially fatal inflammation of the lining of the abdominal cavity. It is often caused by an infection of an organ and often leads to organ failure unless treated.

Jose Luis Garcia Sabrido, head of surgery and a leading gastroenterologist at Gregorio Maranon, went to Havana to see Castro last month. On his return on Dec. 26 he described the Cuban leader's condition as "fine." Castro "is not suffering from a malignant illness but from a benign process with a series of complications," said Sabrido, who declined to be more specific due to medical confidentiality.

Medical sources at the hospital detailed the problems to El Pais that forced Castro to hand over power to his brother Raul at the end of July.

The sources said Castro began suffering from an inflammation of his large intestine in early 2006, requiring an operation to remove part of the large intestine and rectum.

The scars were slow to heal and continued infection impeded his recovery, requiring a second operation to remove all of the large intestine and rectum, according to the hospital sources.

Castro was then hit with an inflammation of the bile duct that blocked secretion of digestive enzymes into the small intestine. The sources told the newspaper that Castro was fitted with an artificial duct made in South Korea, which failed, and was then replaced with one manufactured in Spain.

The bile duct problems that Castro suffers from have a "high rate of mortality" of around 80 percent, the sources told El Pais. *AFP*

51% of US women living without spouse

FOR WHAT EXPERTS SAY IS PROBAbly the first time, more American women are living without a husband than with one, according to a New York Times analysis of census results.

In 2005, 51 percent of women said they were living without a spouse, up from 35 percent in 1950 and 49 percent in 2000.

Coupled with the fact that in 2005 married couples became a minority of all American households for the first time, the trend could ultimately shape a range of social and workplace policies, including the ways government and employers distribute benefits.

Several factors are driving the statistical shift. At one end of the age spectrum, women are marrying later or living with unmarried partners more often and for longer periods of time. At the other end, women are living longer as widows and, after a divorce, are more likely than men to delay remarriage, sometimes delighting in their newfound freedom.

In addition, marriage rates among black women remain low. Only about 30 percent of black women are living with a spouse, according to the Census Bureau, compared to about 49 percent of Hispanic women, 55 percent of non-Hispanic white women and more than 60 percent of Asian women.

In a relatively small number of cases, the living arrangement is temporary, because the husbands are working out of town, are in the military or are institutionalized. But while most women eventually marry, the larger trend is unmistakable.

"This is yet another of the inexorable signs that there is no going back to a world where we can assume that marriage is the main institution that organizes people's lives," said Professor Stephanie Coontz, director of public education for the Council on Contemporary Families, a nonprofit research group. "Most of these women will marry, or have married. But on average, Americans now spend half their adult lives outside marriage." She said this was probably unprecedented with the possible exception of major wartime mobilizations and when black couples were separated during slavery.

Sheila Jamison, who lives in the East Village of Manhattan and works for a media company, is 45 and unmarried. She says her family believes she would have had a better chance of finding a husband if she had attended a historically black college instead of Duke.

"Considering all the weddings I attended in the '80s that have ended so very, very badly, I consider myself straight up lucky," she said. *NYT*

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

US readies major military offensive in Iraq

BAGHDAD—A MAJOR US-BACKED OPERATION to curb militia violence in Baghdad will take at least six months and is probably the final chance for the increasingly shaky government, senior Iraqi political sources said.

Operations were expected to begin next week and last for as long as seven months, one source said.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki and US President George W. Bush have announced plans to reinforce the capital with thousands of Iraqi and US troops to smother the sectarian violence that is pitching Iraq towards all-out civil war.

The top US general in Iraq said on Monday some had already arrived.

Bush has said the operation will "in large part determine the outcome in Iraq" and senior Iraqi officials from the Shiite Islamist majority dominating the government said they believed it was a "last chance" that must be implemented thoroughly.

"The key element of this plan will be the time. The troops will take their time, actually all the time they need to clean an area," one senior politician said late on Sunday.

"The plan will last at least for six months." A previous attempt to clear militants district by district failed last summer because US commanders said there were not enough Iraqi troops to hold gains made by the Americans and because Shiite politicians stopped them arresting or killing leading Shiite militants.

"The final touches are being put out now on the plan," another senior politician told Reuters, forecasting a start next week.

US General George Casey warned on Monday not to expect instant results, saying he foresaw a "gradual evolution" over two to three months and then better security by the summer.

The political sources said that there were only some logistics to finalize, such as bringing additional troops into Baghdad. Officials wanted to ensure the broadest possible political support for the operation, including from radical Shiite leaders such as young cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

Government leaders had also been visiting the top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, to ensure his backing.

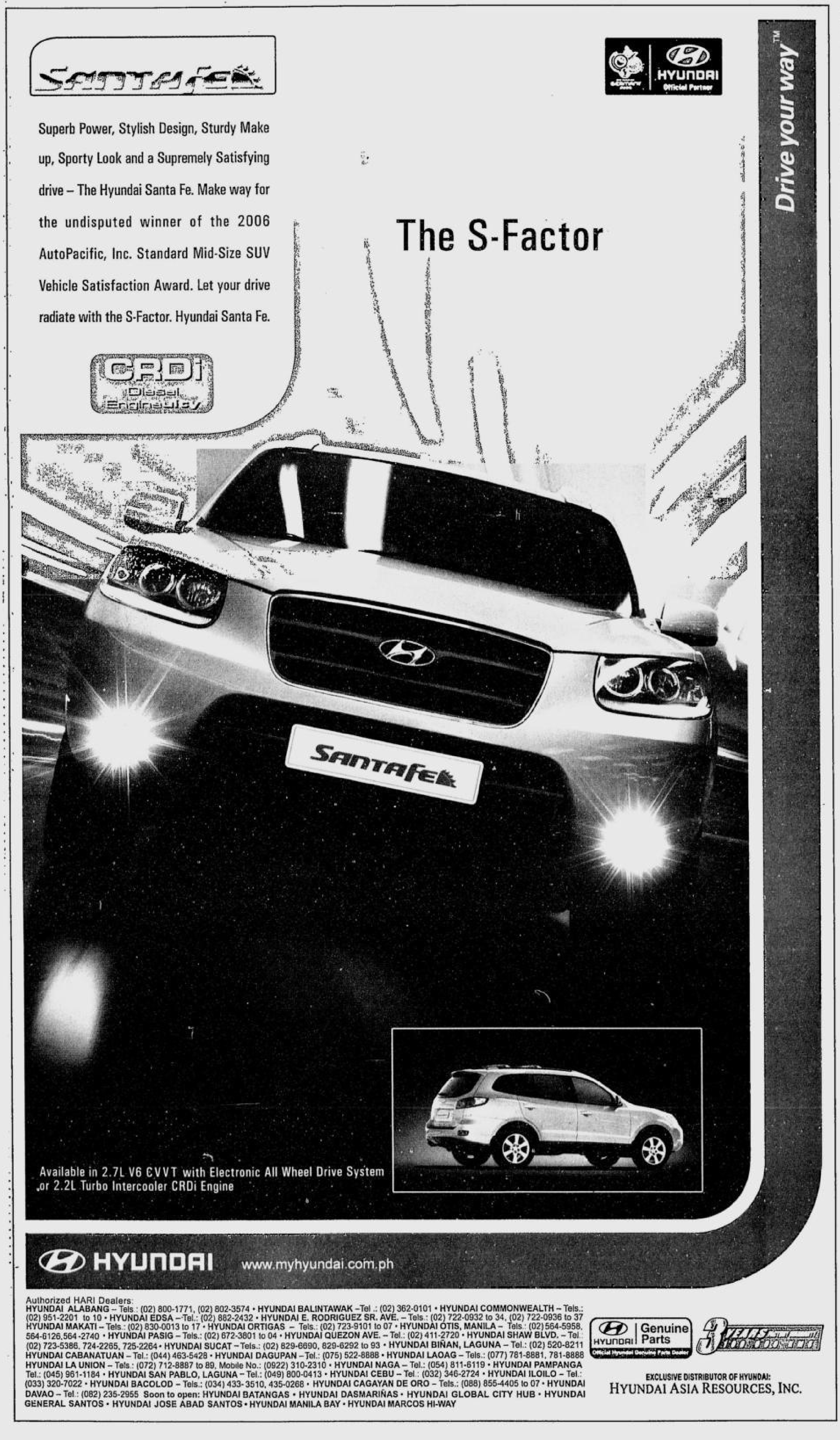
US commanders and Iraq's once dominant Sunni minority have made clear they want any crackdown to include not just Sunni rebels but militias loyal to powerful Shiite Islamists, notably Sadr's Mehdi Army, which they blame for death squad killings.

Shiite officials said Sadr supported the plan.

"This is the last chance. The Americans will give up on us after the seven months," one senior Iraqi official said.

"If this plan fails other options will be weighed, among them the United Nations coming in to run Iraq with a government of national salvation," he added.

The Shiites, including Sistani, are worried about what will happen next if this plan fails. *Reuters*



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HARI AND PCE RALLY FOR PRO NEGOSYO, GO NEGOSYO!

Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI), Hyundai vehicles exclusive local distributor, joins forces with the Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship (PCE) for a more strident reverberation of their mutual call, PRO NEGOSYO and GO NEGOSYO!

Stirred by a common conviction that the entrepreneurs are the backbone of a society, HARI and PCE, separately launched different but synonymous slogans to encourage and support these entrepreneurs, particularly those in the small to medium enterprises (SMEs) who comprise the base or the larger part of the economy.

Since its inception in 2005, the Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship (PCE), a non-stock, non-profit and the preeminent local institution that promotes entrepreneurship nationwide, started to advocate "GoNegosyo" to encourage healthy and positive entrepreneurial mindsets among the Filipinos and help create an environment conducive for starting a business.

On the other hand, Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI) initiated the PRO Negosyo Movement, an active and explicit expression of Hyundai's standpoint to support the entrepreneurs. Launched in October 2006 with the introduction of the new Starex PRO series, HARI's new variant of the family favorite Starex van that caters to the specific needs of businesses particularly in the transportation aspect, PRO Negosyo Movement is HARI's banner in pushing this advocacy through different activities and tie-ups like the series of business forums held recently in the different Hyundai dealers in Metro Manila and Central Luzon, and the Starex PRO donation to Gawad Kalinga's Pangkabuhayan projects.

Bound by the same dignified aims, HARI and PCE now puts their voices together for a louder shout of their cause as they formally establish a tie-up that will echo each other's rallying call.

With HARI's tie up with PCE, HARI is officially recognized as PCE's non-exclusive auto partner and official GOLD sponsor for the year 2007, which covers the GoNegosyo activities and events all year round. In further support of PCE's activities and undertakings, HARI vowed to provide PCE with two (2) Hyundai Starex PRO vehicles.

HARI also took active participation as an exhibitor in the recently concluded activity of PCE, the Go Negosyo for OFWs and Balikbayans, held at Market! Market! on December 15 to 17. In the Starex PRO booth, guests were given concepts on how the Starex PRO can be their ideal partner in the transportation aspect of their businesses. The third day of the event where four actual dressed-up units of the Starex PRO were displayed at the fountain area saw the people face-to-face with tangible business ideas through the Starex PRO.

With these efforts, HARI further affirms its sincere commitment to contribute to the economic, environmental, and social sustainability of the community through innovative technology, business solutions, and social advocacy.

ADVT

WHAT'S INSIDE

Sharapova gets through heat, foe/A24

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Alcano, Luat lead RP bets in All Kansai 9-Ball Open

REIGNING WORLD CHAMPION RONATO Alcano and veteran cue artist Rodolfo "Boy Samson" Luat will compete in the 17th Annual All Kansai 9-Ball Open on Jan. 20-21 at the Mag Suminoe Billiards Hall in Osaka, Japan.

It will be the first major tournament of Alcano, winner of the 2006 World Pool Championship in Manila, this year.

Luat lost to Niels Feijen of the Netherlands in the finals of the recent Derby City Classic held in Louisville, Kentucky.

Despite failing to win any of the three major events in the Classic, the Angeles City native Luat still finished second to compatriot Efren "Bata" Reyes in the Master of the Table award that gave him $3,000 to go with an $8,400 runner-up prize in the 9-ball division.

The 50-year-old Luat wound up runner-up to American John Schmidt in the 2006 US Open in Chessapeake, Virginia, and topped the 2006 SMB Asian 9-ball tour Kaoshiung leg in Taiwan.

Other Filipinos competing in the Kansai Open offering a top purse of 1-million yen are 2006 All Japan champion Lee Van Corteza, 2006 World Pool Leaque kingpin Dennis Orcollo, Antonio Lining, Ramil Gallego, Roel Esquillo, Rudy Morta, Dondon Razalan and Carlo Biado.

Reyes and Francisco "Django" Bustamante were also invited to play in the tournament, but have yet to confirm their participation.

The Filipinos are eyeing a repeat of their 2005 campaign there, where they dominated the event with Warren Kiamco emerging as the champion with Orcollo, Gallego, and Lining completing a 1-2-3-4 finish for the Philippines.

Masaaki Tanaka is the defending champion and will lead the host country's charge along with Asian Games 8-ball gold medalist Satoshi Kawabata.

Osaka is the hometown of Kawabata, who is best remembered for coming from behind to foil Antonio "Ga-Ga" Gabica, 9-7, in the 8-ball gold-medal match at the recent 15th Asian Games in Doha, Qatar.

Also expected to compete in the race-to-nine tournament are former world champions Wu Chia-ching and Chao Fong-pang of Taiwan and Kunihiko Takahashi of Japan, rising Japanese star Hatayo Hijikata, South Koreans Jeong Young-hwa and Kim Woong-dae and former world titlists Ralf Souquet of Germany and Mika Immonen of Finland. *Marlon Bernardino, contributor*

Pacquiao set to ink Macau fight contract

ALL INDICATIONS POINT TO FILIPINO superstar Manny Pacquiao signing the fight contract within this week for his April 28 showdown with Korean world champ In Jin Chi at the Wynn Hotel and Casino in Macau, China.

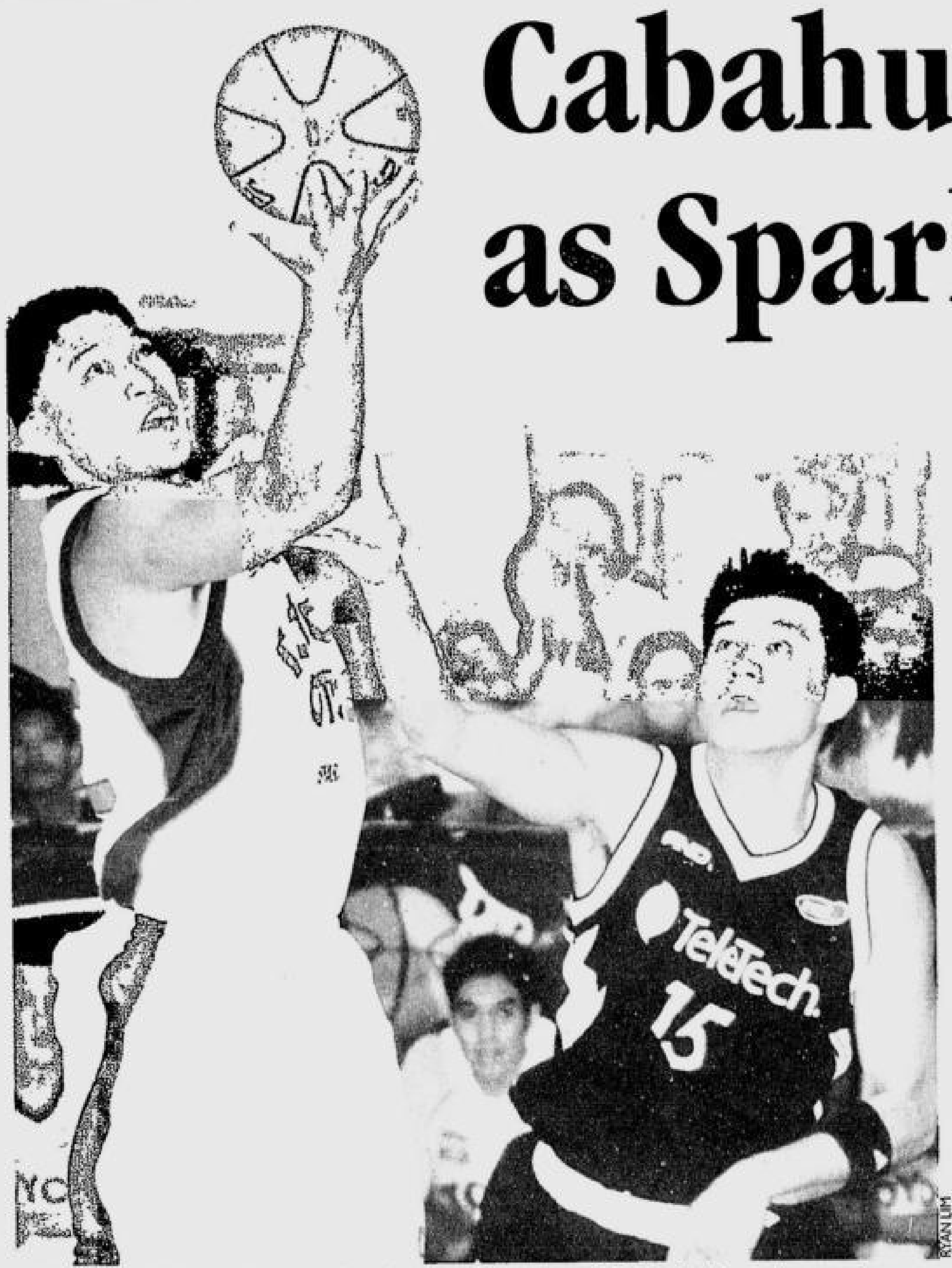
Promoter Bob Arum of Top Rank, in an interview in the US, has indicated that he was looking to finalize the deal "within the next couple of days" in a fight that will pit pound-for-pound topnotcher Pacquiao against the durable Chi.

Arum was reportedly ecstatic over the fact that the buzz for the Pacquiao-Chi fight in Macau was phenomenal, although he pointed out that he was still not sure whether the fight would be distributed by HBO, Showtime or an independent network.

In the same interview carried by website Boxingconfidential.com, Arum also dispelled rumors that he was trying to lure Japan's top promoter Akihiko Honda into selling half of the promotional rights on undefeated Edwin Valero, which was what the Venezuelan claimed in an interview with media earlier.

Valero had claimed that Arum, along with Shelly Finkel and Oscar De La Hoya, had contacted his promoter in an attempt to purchase half of the Venezuelan's promotional rights. *Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor*

Cabahug sparkles as Sparks prevail


RYAN LIM

TOYOTA Otis' Dennis Daa goes for a layup against Teletech's Francis Mercado yesterday.

By Jasmine W. Payo

STILL ON A ROLL, PATRICK **Cabahug buried a jumper in the final minute to keep Toyota Otis in the running for an outright PBL semifinal slot.**

Cabahug, coming off two impressive performances, nailed the key basket at the 1:02 mark of the game as the Sparks held off the TeleTech Titans, 69-65, in the Silver Cup yesterday at the Emilio Aguinaldo College Gym.

Magnolia Ice Cream, on the other hand, rode on the breakout performance of Bonbon Custodio to frustrate Henkel Sista's own semifinal bid in the first game.

Making up for his mediocre performances, Custodio poured in 19 points as the Spinners routed the Super Sealers, 68-49.

Henkel Sista played without head coach Caloy Garcia, who served a one-game suspension for unbecoming conduct. Assistant mentor Mike Buendia manned the Sista sideline.

For coach Koy Banal, Garcia's absence was just one factor why the Super Sealers couldn't get their offensive game going.

"They were pressured, they needed to win," observed Banal. "Winning our last game is a good send-off for us to the playoff. It's a good confidence booster."

Toyota Otis joined Mail More at 7-3 to remain ahead of the bid for an outright semifinal slot, the bonus given to the top two teams at the end of the classification phase.

Hapee-PCU and Harbour Centre, toting similar 6-3 cards, will try to forge a playoff for the incentive tomorrow.

"We had Cabahug in the fourth quarter, and (RJ) Jazul also played well as a reliever," said coach Louie Alas after the Sparks rolled to their fourth straight win.

Marvin Cruz topscored with 17 markers, while Cabahug drilled in 10 of his 15 points in the second half.

The Spinners, who settled at eighth place with a 3-7 card, will battle cellar-dwelling Kettle Korn-UST in the first knockout phase.

At a disarray in the opening minutes, the Super Sealers absorbed their second straight loss for a 6-4 record.

Custodio and Nigerian center Sam Ekwe towed the Spinners to a 30-20 halftime lead built on an early double-digit spread, 17-7.

Showing no signs of wearing down, Custodio shot six points in a run that put the Spinners on top by 20 in the third period, 44-24.

Despite the efforts of Kelvin Gregorio, the Super Sealers could not get past the double-figure barrier in the final period.

Ekwe contributed 12 markers and 10 rebounds for the Spinners, who ended a three-game skid.

GAMES TOMORROW
(EAC Gym)
2 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs Kettle Korn-UST
4 p.m.—Cebuana Lhuillier vs Hapee-PCU

The scores:

First Game

MAGNOLIA 68—Custodio 19, Ekwe 12, Aljamal 7, Villanueva 7, Escobal 6, Chan 6, Rañeses 4, Gamalinda 3, Jones 2, Tecson 2, Menor 0, Taganas 0, Barcellano 0, Bombeo 0, Angeles 0.

HENKEL SISTA 49—Gregorio 15, Saldua 7, Malabanan 6, Alfad 6, Arellano 5, Misa 5, Eman 3, Bonus 2, Bauzon 0, Robles 0, Layug 0, Ebuen 0.

Quarters: 14-7, 30-20, 50-33, 68-49

Second Game

TOYOTA OTIS 69—Cruz 17, Cabahug 15, Daa 7, Rodriguez 7, Jazul 7, Aldave 6, Coronel 5, Jaime 3, Guevarra 2, Fajardo 0, Baluyot 0, Dedicatoria 0.

TELETECH 65—Grijaldo 22, Estrada 13, Guerrero 6, Tan 5, Valenzuela 4, Capus 4, Labagala 4, Doruelo 4, Latoreno 2, Magdadaro 1, Mercado 0, Villamin 0.

Quarters: 20-22, 36-37, 48-52, 69-65

Asian Zonal stalls probe

THE NATIONAL CHESS FEDERATION OF the Philippines' Internal Affairs Committee, which was tasked to probe the current game-fixing/networking controversy rocking the local chess community, will start its official investigation once the Asian Zonal Championship comes to an end, saying that some of the players competing there are among those who will be questioned.

NCFP executive director Sammy Estimo, however, said the investigative arm has already gathered hard evidence against the players involved in the scam wherein players allegedly drop matches intentionally to rig tournament results.

Some of these players are currently representing the country in Vietnam.

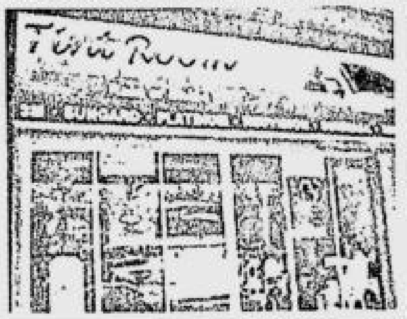
"The charges against the networking suspects will be investigated by the Internal Affairs Committee who shall give the invited players the chance to refute the accusations consistent with due process," said Estimo, a lawyer.

The latest to refute charges of rigging game results was Woman National Master (WNM) Enerose Magno, who said she was shocked to learn that she is one of the players being targeted by the investigation.

"I was never involved in game-fixing, that's why I was surprised and shocked when I saw my name as one of the suspects," said Magno. "Never in my life did I resort to such kind of wrongdoing."

National Masters Mirabeau Maga, Alex Milagrosa as well the father of WNM Christy Bernales, Ferdinand Leysa and Dino Ballever also denied involvement in networking/game-fixing.

It shall be recalled that when NCFP president Prospero. "Butch" Pichay Jr. first broke the news on the mess in this paper, he said that there are "at least six players" in the association's watch list for allegedly conniving to form a network that fixes the results of the tournaments. Among the suspects tagged in the scam were IMs Darwin Laylo and Ronald Dableo. *Marlon Bernardino*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NOTICE OF UNITY CONGRESS
SAMAHANG BASKETBOL NG PILIPINAS

To: ALL BONA FIDE MEMBERS OF THE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES AND PILIPINAS BASKETBALL

You are cordially invited to attend the Unity Congress of Samahang Basketbol ng Philipinas Inc. ("SBP") to be held on Monday, 5th February 2007, 11:00 a.m., at the Ballroom "A" of Dusit Hotel Nikko, Ayala Center, Makati City, for the purpose of hearing the report of the three-man Panel, recognizing the members of Basketball Association of the Philippines and Pilipinas Basketball that have been granted probationary membership status by the SBP, overseeing the conduct of the organizational meeting of the Board of Trustees of SBP and transacting any other business which may properly come before said meeting. Registration will start at 10:00 a.m. Lunch will be served at 12:00 noon.

Contemporaneously with the Unity Congress, the organizational meeting of the Board of Trustees of SBP will be held for the purpose of electing the officers of SBP and considering such other matters as may be properly brought up at the meeting.

Makati City, 11th January 2007.

(Sgd) : MARIEVIC G. RAMOS-AÑONUEVO
Acting Corporate Secretary

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Chot ready to roll up sleeves with RP cagers

By June Navarro

IF IT WERE ALL UP TO HIM, coach Chot Reyes would regroup the Philippine Basketball Association-backed national squad and buckle down to work right away.

With the league affirming its commitment to the formation of the national squad, Reyes wants to immediately put the pool back in the gym with an eye toward representing the country in international meets anew.

"We want to start (the training) as soon as possible," said Reyes, whose team took a five-month respite from training.

The national dribblers successfully defended the Sultan's Cup crown in Brunei last August and have not seen in any international tournament, local or foreign, due to the controversy hounding the country's basketball association.

The country's major stakeholders are trying to form a unified association—the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP)—in a bid to get the recognition of the international basketball federation (Fiba) and have the country's suspension from international meets lifted.

With the PBA backing the main objective of the SBP, Reyes felt the need to reactivate his troops at once.

"With the PBA supporting the SBP, it sends a strong signal to Fiba that the best talents are here in the SBP organization," said Reyes.

Though he has yet to sit down with respect to the training schedule of the national team with PBA Commissioner Noli Eala, the San Miguel Beer mentor will most likely employ the same schedule before the team temporarily disbanded five months ago.

Reyes said the players would train for the national pool in the morning and practice for their respective teams in the afternoon almost on a daily basis.

Once the country's suspension with the Fiba is lifted, the national team will see action in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association championships in July, the qualifying tournament for the Asian Championships to be held in Saitama, Japan, at the end of the year.

The Asian Championship is qualifying event for the Olympics where the top two teams advance to the Beijing Games outright.

The International Basketball Federation (Fiba) has tasked the Basketball Association of the Philippines and Pilipinas Basketball to form a unified national sports association for the sport.

The joint communique signed by representatives of the BAP and the PB in Tokyo paved the way for the formation of the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas, the group which seeks the recognition of the Philippine Olympic Committee and the Fiba.

Unification talks, however, were further delayed after the BAP executive board dumped Sen. Jinggoy Estrada as its president, after the latter had already made headway as far as unity talks were concerned.

Just the same, SBP officials, led by PLDT chief Manny V. Pangilinan, vowed to continue seeking the blessings of the Fiba with or without the BAP.

"I strongly feel that the Fiba will hear the plea of the SBP and give the national team a chance to compete again in the international arena," said Reyes.

The PBA board of governors approved a shorter second conference in a recent board meeting to give way for the training of the national team.

REYES: Put the pool back.

Volleybelles top Olympic contenders

Marc Anthony Reyes

THEY MAY NOT BE OLYMPIC SHOO-INS yet, but the Fil-American beach volleybelles and tennis players are the closest to getting to the Beijing 2008 so far.

Beach volleyball's Heidi Ilustre and Diana Pascua and tennis' Cecil Mamiit and Eric Taino are closer than everybody else in making the RP Olympic teams, according to their respective national sports associations.

The Philippine Volleyball Federation said yesterday that Ilustre and Pascua, bronze medalists in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games and quarterfinalists in the recent Doha Asian Games, can make the Olympic cut if they can compete in at least eight of the 28 legs of the World Tour.

This year there will 18 legs in the beach volleyball tour and 10 more will be played until midyear next year, according to PVF secretary general Otie Camangian.

"The top eight rankings they get from competing in the tour will be computed and then will determine if they can qualify for the Olympics," said Camangian.

He added that Ilustre and Pascua are now competing, on their own expense, in a World Tour leg in New Zealand where they are expected to make a decent finish.

Mamiit and Taino, on the other hand, could easily qualify for the Olympics based on their current rankings, according to Philippine Lawn Tennis Association executive vice president Ajay Pathak.

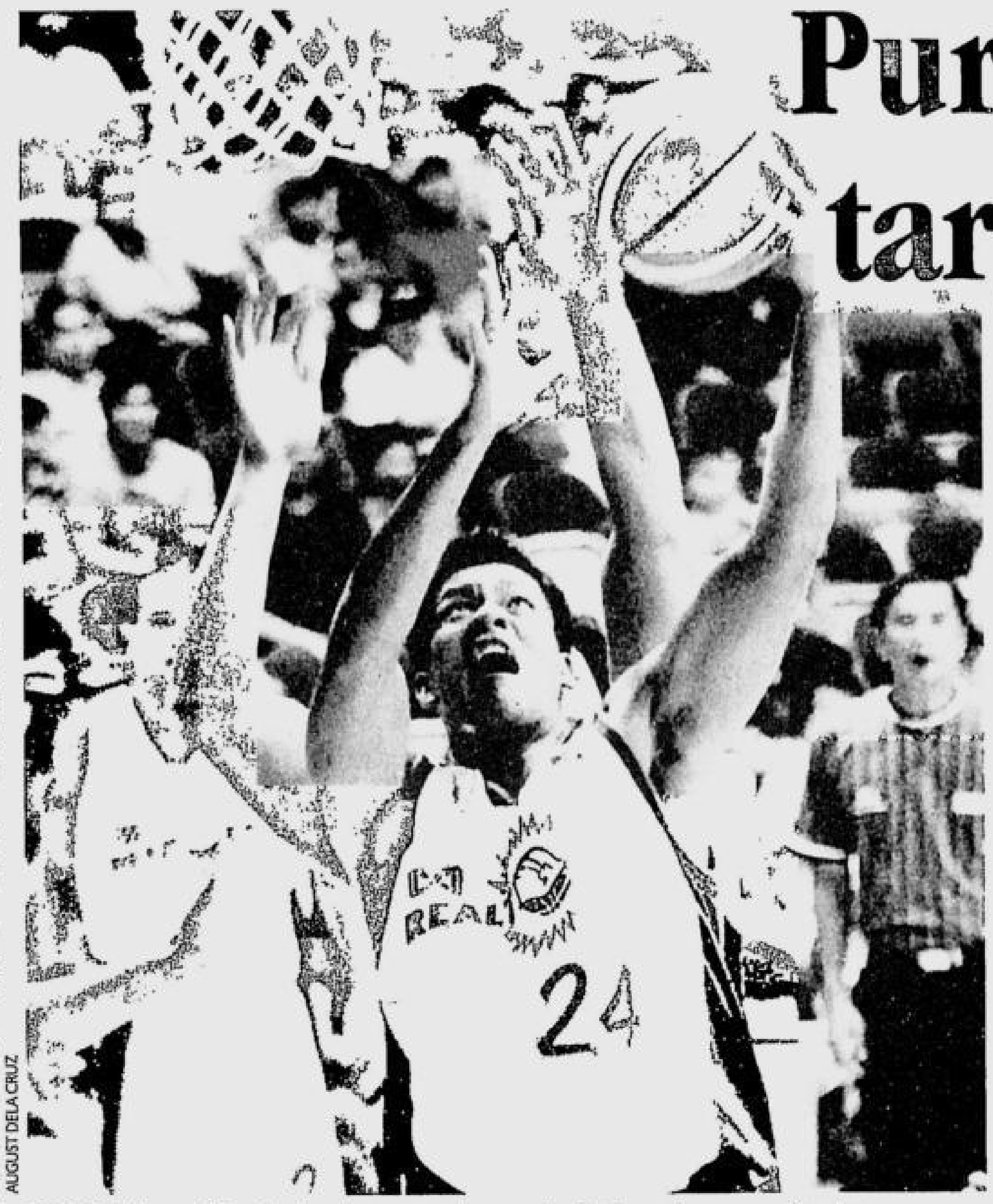
"If the Olympics is held today, they should qualify," Pathak told the INQUIRER.

However, the determining factor would be the ATP rankings of the players just before the 2008 Olympiad which qualifies the top 64 in the world as shoo-ins for the main draw.

Though Mamiit and Taino are ranked lower than 64th in singles and doubles, Pathak said only three players from each country could qualify, leaving enough slots for the Fil-Ams to make it.

"For example, there are 20 Americans in the top 64, but only three would make it," explained Pathak.

The only time a Filipino netter made it to the Olympics was in 1984, when the sport was still a demonstration sport and Manny Tolentino got invited, said Pathak.



AUGUST DELA CRUZ

RICKY Calimag of Sta. Lucia tries to score from under in the series opener Sunday.

Purefoods, SLR target 2-0 lead

By Musong R. Castillo

PUREFOODS AND STA. LUCIA, SIDES THAT WEREN'T GIVEN much of a chance at the start of the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup quarterfinals, gun for commanding 2-0 leads against favored foes today at the Cuneta Astrodome in Pasay City.

The defending champion Chunkee Giants collide with hulking and beefy Talk 'N Text in the 4:35 p.m. game, while Sta. Lucia slugs it out with Red Bull in the 7:20 p.m. contest.

Both squads churned out surprise results, with the Giants dominating the Phone Pals for most of the game before holding off a spirited end-game charge to hack out an 87-84 decision on Sunday.

The Realtors, on the other hand, did not show signs of fatigue after making this round through the long route, jumping out of the gates hard to post commanding leads and cruising to a 96-89 victory.

But things looked well enough for the Barako in the second half against the Realtors, giving coach Yeng Guiao reason to not frown at the defeat but instead expect something big from his team starting tonight.

"I did not expect us to play well, but I did not expect us to play that bad in the first half," Guiao said. "Obviously, there was some rust and I'm glad that we got that out.

"Our second half performance looked good enough and I expect the team to pick it up some more for the next game and the rest of the series."

Red Bull fell behind by as many as 28 points before methodically nibbling away at that deficit in the final two periods.

The Barako almost pulled it out, coming to within five points twice before two crucial three-point misses and two key trifectaville conversions from Kelly Williams iced the Realtors' 1-0 lead.

Purefoods, on the other hand, were led by an inspired Marc Pingris, who topscored with 19 points, grabbed 17 rebounds and swatted away five enemy shots just two days after getting to talk to his American father for the first time in 25 years.

It was obviously a performance that helped spark the Giants into cutting down a giant of a team in Talk 'N Text down to size.

Despite suiting up Yancy de Ocampo for the first time since that blockbuster, one-sided deal with Air21 before the holidays, the Phone Pals groped for form and were not in any way dominating against the much-shorter Purefoods side.

The Giants trailed briefly after the end of the first period before their fluid transition game befuddled Talk 'N Text for the remainder of the game.

Kerby Raymundo and James Yap, the others who tossed in twin digit scores for Purefoods on Sunday, will again be the prime offensive options for coach Ryan Gregorio.

PVF to pay $.1M debt

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE VOLLEYBALL FEDERATION is confident it would get favorable response from the international federation with regards to the $100,000 debt it incurred for hosting the World Grand Prix twice.

PVF president Pete Mendoza reported yesterday that he has already sent a letter to the FIVB, affirming to pay the amount, but on a longer period of time.

He didn't set any deadline because FIVB didn't give the PVF any but instead just asked for a "schedule of payment" from the federation.

Mendoza said he is expecting the FIVB to give them enough time to pay up, considering that the debts were made by previous volleyball administrations.

The debts were made after the country hosted the 2003 and 2004 World Women's Volleyball Grand Prix, a move highly criticized since it featured world-class players and left local talents in the sidelines.

Mendoza didn't comment whether he plans to stage future Grand Prix on local shores.

"We didn't want a commitment we can't fulfill although we expressed our intentions to meet our obligations," said Mendoza.

Gaston relinquishes BAP directorship

FRITZ GASTON, FORMERLY OF THE DEfunct U-Tex Wranglers team in the PBA, yesterday said he is giving up his post as director/spokesman of the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP).

"I have been enunciating for some time now the BAP's position on many contentious issues concerning the very survival of basketball in the Philippines," said Gaston. "However, I feel that the common good of all stakeholders—players, teams, leagues and the fans—has to reign supreme in the end."

While the BAP remains accredited by the international governing body of basketball (Fiba), Gaston said he has realized that the majority of movers and supporters of the sport in the country have already decided to turn a new leaf and to end acrimony and in-fighting.

SPORTSWATCH

Chiefs turn back Generals

TYLON DARJUAN HIT A TRIPLE AND GIO CIRIACRUZ SCORED TWO CHARITIES in the endgame, allowing the Arellano University Chiefs to surprise the Emilio Aguinaldo College Generals, 82-78, yesterday in the 14th Petron-National Capital Region Athletic Association (NCRAA) men's basketball tournament at the EAC Sports Complex. Their heroics came with 19 seconds to go, enabling the Chiefs to stay in the hunt for one of three remaining semifinal slots with their 7-3 win-loss record. Orlando Daroya topscored for the Chiefs with 22 points. He put the Chiefs ahead with his layup off Ciriacruz's pass with 1:53 to go. The Generals, who lost a five-point lead in the last five minutes, forced the game's last deadlock at 75 when Ronjay Buenafe sank two free throws with 1:34 left. The setback put to waste Buenafe's career-high 39 points and a league record eight triples for the Generals. A day earlier, the PATTS College of Aeronautics downed La Salle-Dasmariñas, 73-62, to rise to 7-2.

SJC Cockers Club derby today

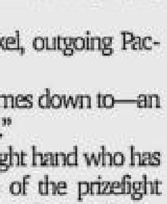
A GUARANTEED PRIZE OF P300,000 AWAITS THE CHAMPIONS TODAY WHEN the second leg of the SJC Cockers Club 4-cock derby blasts off at San Juan Coliseum starting at 5 p.m. The 65- fight program will be supported by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Four entries ruled the opening leg last Jan. 8 with 4-0 (win-loss) slates: Labanan Sa Pasay Ika Feb. 23 (Eric dela Rosa and Butchoy Olano), SJC 8-Cock International (R. Pineda), LCC Dumbo (Louie Cua) and SJC Sebastian (Bobby Nicolas). In a related development, five more US cockers arrived yesterday in time for the SJC International 8-Cock Derby on Jan. 22, 24 and 26. Set to unleash their winningest fighters are Grady Malone of Alabama, Paul Fassoth of California, James Campbell of Ohio, Norman Rockwell and Ben Torralba of Lousiana. Meanwhile, SJC's Sama-Sama Fastest Win One Cock-Ulutan, slated on Jan. 19, dangles a guaranteed prize of P100,000 for an entry fee of P1,100. Hosts are Ed Guevarra, Minda Amoyo, Goody Lamboloto and Edna Gater. Call 725 -5369 and 725 -6563.

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Astimegoesby (3), Special Lad (6), Heart of the Wind (1), JJ's Friend/Maple My Love (1)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Donna Messier (7), Key Element (10), Ilocos Pride (2), Step On the Gas (1), Bachelor of Arts (5)
Race 3—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Odyssey (10), Farragut's Order (1), Miss Vicky (8), Carbon Copy (3), Pabilic Express (7), Nitty Gritty (4)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Touch of Glory (1), Air D'Truth (3), Kaye's Cat (7), Runway Zero-Six (5), Amazing Pace (9)
Race 5—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Jay Nicole (8), Field Star (5), King's Choice (2), Run Like D'Wind (1), Valid Hazm (11), Real Tough (12)
Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Latin Music (3), Bom's Bom's (4), Hard Way (1), Archer/Bullish Dream (6), Mika's Pride (7)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Manila's Gem (1), Eskapo (5), Smokin' Red (9), Batang Westside (7), Ideal Gaze (2)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Long Hitter (8), I Miss YOu (12), Western Dancer (2), War General (5), Rock Attack Attack (6), Class Action (10)

Steve Wynn gambles on $5-million kimchi

BARE EYE



Recab Trinidad

THERE'S REALLY VERY LITTLE TO APPRECIATE in Manny Pacquiao's scheduled next fight.

The foe being a Korean featherweight, there definitely will be kimchi on the side.

But how good is Injin Chi?

Going to Macau on April 28 would be like coming to a grand dinner where the guests are made to wonder about the main course.

There's always the risk of the chef coming up with stale meat, or maybe a flat fish course.

***

Of course, we have reason to complain this early.

There was that sure chance of a first-class course that had to be skipped due to a promotional snafu.

Marco Antonio Barrera, reigning world super featherweight champ, would've been real tamale.

We don't know how hot really, but the boxing world need not be told that, against Barrera, Pacquiao will have to rely on both fists—use both spoon and fork, if you please.

***

Again Chi?

Pacquiao might have to tie one hand to his waist in order to make the fight interesting.

Who's Chi?

It's a shame, swears Shelly Finkel, outgoing Pacquiao manager.

Rants Finkel: "That is what it comes down to—an old featherweight for the right price."

Finkel was the same seasoned fight hand who has helped push Pacquiao to the top of the prizefight world with that classic trilogy against Erik Morales.

***

Writes the Bulletin's Nick Giongco, the ringside sniper who drew those peppery quotes from Finkel: "Chi is the reigning World Boxing Council 126-lb champion and a holder of decent 31-3-1 win-loss card with 18 knockouts, but ringsiders believe Pacquiao would feast on the Korean as though the 33-year-old slugger were a plate of kimchi."

Giongco likewise notes that Finkel was "instrumental in rescuing Pacquiao from the claws of New Jersey promoter Murad Muhammad in 2006."

***

There's reason to raise the issue of relevance in the case of Pacquiao's next foe.

It's also easy to suspect Finkel's displeasure after he had been junked by Pacquiao as manager after all he had done for the RP boxing celebrity.

But knowing Finkel, he was greatly bothered that the fans, including the immeasurable horde that worships Pacquiao in the Philippines, stand to be shortchanged.

Of course, Pacquiao has been assured of a juicy $5-million purse.

***

Finkel is however certain that, in the give-and-take prizefight world, it's what you give to the audience that counts most.

While Pacquiao had to rage like a howler, a Pacific Storm, against great opponents, a sneeze would appear strong enough to please the gullible that, in this case, includes Steve Wynn, who's bankrolling the Macau feast slated on April 28.

Mr. Wynn may no longer have the healthy eyes to view and discern a good Korean dish.

But this next one definitely does look a distant cousin of a relevant $5-M Mexican dinner, complete with tequila, taco and tamale.

The price is not right for this suspect kimchi.

RP chessers resume bid in Vietnam Asian Zonal

PHU QUOC, KIEN GIANG PROVINCE, VIETnam—Filipino International Masters Oliver Dimakiling and Wesley So try to sustain their fine showing when the Asian Zone 3.3 chess championships resume with the seventh round Tuesday night.

The 10th-seeded Dimakiling will play white against No. 8 seed GM Le Quang Liem of Vietnam in a keenly awaited match at the top board of the tournament shaping up to be another Philippines-Vietnam showdown.

So, bidding to become the country's youngest-ever GM at 13, will handle black against compatriot GM Nelson Mariano II.

Both Dimakiling and So trail the 15-year-old Le by only half a point going into the final three rounds of the tournament being held to determine the region's two representatives to the 2007 Fide world chess championship scheduled later this year.

"Let's hope Oliver and Wesley will continue to play well and bring honors to the country," said National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) president and Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay during an interview last Monday.

Two other Filipino campaigners making a surprising run for the title—NM Oliver Barbosa and GMA Cup top Filipino finisher Hamed Nouri—clash in a crucial seventh-round encounter.

GM Rogelio Antonio Jr. and IM Ronald Dableo, clash in another all-Filipino tussle.

GM Eugene Torre tries to recover lost ground when he meets No. 27 seed Nguyen Thien Viet of Vietnam.

Top seed Mark Paragua battles Nguyen Van Hai while IM Darwin Laylo meets FM Duong The Anh.

Meanwhile, the Chess Journalists Association of the Philippines (CJAP) was formed recently with Ed Andaya of People's Tonight as president and Gus Villanueva of the Journal Group of Publications as adviser.

The other officers of the association composed of sportswriters covering the chess beat are Roy Luarca of INQUIRER and Dante Navarro of Philippine Star as vice presidents; Arman Armero of Standard Today as secretary; Joey Villar of Philippine Star as treasurer; and Dani Simon of Police Files as auditor. National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) president and Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. and FIDE honorary president Florencio Campomanes have been invited to induct the officers.

DEBBIE de Villa: Groping for championship form.

Little Debbie opens defense of Ladies title

By Musong R. Castillo

CANLUBANG, LAGUNA—A YOUNG, talented crop led by precocious defending champion Debbie de Villa sees action today as the ICTSI-Philippine Ladies Open amateur championship tees off at long and wind-swept The Country Club here.

Little Debbie will be coming into the tournament seeking to duplicate a feat last achieved by Jennifer Rosales, and she has a formidable field to contend with in the 54-hole event serving as one of two major women's championships in the country.

Carmelette Villaroman is the senior citizen in the local roster at 30 and is the logical favorite owing to a strong performance in the match play RP Women's also played over this long layout late last month.

And there is Dottie Ardina, possibly the youngest in the field at 13 and who could go down as the youngest to ever win this tournament after Rosales, who pulled off the first of five straight titles at 14 years old.

Ardina will be coming off a banner season, having won the national titles of Hong Kong and Indonesia and her division in the Junior Worlds. But her crushing 5-and-4 loss to Villaroman in the RP Women's points to the veteran as the clear favorite.

"It's a long-hitter's course," Villaroman, the toast of RP amateur golf in the late 80s and early 90s until motherhood got in the way, said. "Hitting the greens would be key. I feel confident in my game."

Meanwhile, De Villa, who won last year at the shorter Manila Golf layout inside Forbes Park, is not enjoying the finest of forms of late, missing the cut in the RP Women's after turning scores in the high 80s.

Thailand, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Malaysia have sent their best junior players to familiarize themselves with the conditions at The Country Club which will also the Asian team championships or Queen Sirikit Cup this coming March.

Other notable locals in the field are Cyna Rodriguez, also a winner in the Junior Worlds, Lora Roberto and Anya Tanpinco. Two Fil-Ams, Daffodil Sanchez and Cristina Corpus are also seeing action.

Formal opening rites were actually held yesterday with Earl McCarthy of TCC, Jun Galindez of WGAP president Gina Tuason and Mary Grace Estuesta gracing the affair.

Alabang's Mango Tee set Feb.7-11

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL V. Ramos will head a stellar cast in the 23rd Mango Tee member-guest tournament of the Alabang Country Club on Feb. 7-11 with a fully-booked roster of 320 teams vying for millions of pesos worth of prizes.

Ramos, chairman emeritus of the Federation of Golf Clubs Philippines, will also lead the hitting of the ceremonial balls on Feb. 5, together with club officials and representatives of the major backers of one of the country's most prestigious club invitationals.

Alabang has been FVR's home club even before he became the country's president and it's where he regularly plays his early morning "jogs" or quick rounds.

Club president Johnny Castillo and the Mango Tee committee chaired by Ed Lacson jointly announced tournament backers that will guarantee another successful season of the event. Pilipinas Shell and Smart are co-presenters while Mitsubishi Motors/Citimotors, Kart Plaza Mfg./Yamaha and The Turf Co./Club Car are hole-in-one sponsors.

There will be Mitsubishi cars at stake in all four par-3s of the course aside from a Club Car and other major prizes for the tournament and the raffle during the awarding ceremony on Feb. 11.

Jun Galindez, chair of the golf committee, also bared that a new registration record was set for the Mango Tee. All 320 slots were filled up just 20 minutes after registration was opened at 7:45 a.m. on Nov. 10.

There are still 80 teams on the waiting list. Due to the low percentage of cancellations, only a few of them might get into the tee-off schedule which are two shotgun batches every day, the first at 6:15 a.m. and the second at 12:15 p.m.

Rivero not stopping until she's queen

By Jasmine W. Payo

NO ONE REMEMBERS THE RUNNER-up.

It's a motivational quote that Mary Antoinette "Toni" Rivero seems to have taken to heart.

"I think I could have done better; every athlete wants the gold, you don't settle for the silver," the taekwondo teen sensation said a month after clinching a silver in the 2006 Doha Asian Games.

A child prodigy, Rivero had always been intense. Even in training, the 5-foot-8 jin often attacks her sparring partners with ferocity.

"I have to practice for my head kicks so next time I can get the gold," she said. "The only time I get satisfied is when I get the gold."

Rivero, though, isn't being too hard on herself. In fact, she initially doubted her chances of crashing into the medal board.

"It was my first time to join the Asian Games, so I didn't expect to win a medal," said Rivero. "Usually, it takes two Asian Games before you win, that's what they say. When you're competing for the first time, you usually get a feel of it first."

But clearly, Rivero hardly needed a warm up. After all, the gifted 18-year-old already debuted in the sports' biggest stage.

Rivero shot to fame in the 2004 Athens Olympics, where she displayed tremendous courage to reach the semifinal round and finish fifth overall.

Then 16, Rivero was the youngest Olympian in the Philippine contingent. Three years earlier, she also made history as the youngest member of the Philippine taekwondo team at 13.

"My strategy is just to stay focused, to trust yourself that you can beat the opponent," said Rivero, a gold medalist in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games.

RIVERO: Next time I can get the gold.

This year, Rivero will kick off her campaign in the Iran Open in February. But she added that she also aims to finish her high school home-study program in Angelicum in a few months.

"I'm concentrating on my studies and taekwondo," noted Rivero.

Other major competitions lined up for the year include the World Championship, the Thailand SEA Games and the Olympic World Qualifier.

Just like a typical teen, Rivero enjoys the perks of her sport. "We get to travel around the world, we get to meet other people from other countries," she said.

Yet as quick as her attacks, Rivero immediately got her focus back.

"My goal right now is to take it step by step, of course, I want to win," she said.

THE RIVIERA GOLF CLUB COUPLES-...
LET'S HAVE FUN AND RAISE FUNDS FOR THE EDUCATION OF OUR FUTURE LEADERS

FUN GOLF TOURNAMENT: The officers, board of directors and staff of the Christian Harvest Academy, a non-profit primary and secondary Christian school located at the FTI complex in Taguig City, will hold it's 2nd fun golf tournament on January 26 at the Couples course of the Riviera Golf Club in Silang, Cavite. Proceeds of the event will be used for the acquisition of a new building. (From left), Gina Tan Cardoso, Cari Domingo, Marilyn Ricardo, Gemma Ramos, Minda Rocha, Arlene Magbanua, Ellen Gravador, Art Lising, and Freddie Magbanua. Seated are Alex Espiritu, Fahji Fajardo and Emil Ramos.

CPU Net benefit golf slated at Wack Wack

FORE THE CHILD!, A BENEFIT GOLF tournament organized by the Child Protection Unit Network (CPU Net) in partnership with SMART Infinity, will be held tomorrow at the West Course of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club, Mandaluyong City. Registration starts at 5:30 a.m. and tee off will be at 7 a.m. The ceremonial tee off will be participated in by former Pres. Fidel V. Ramos, former Supreme Court Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, Mandaluyong Mayor Neptali Gonzales II, Philippine National Police Chief Gen. Oscar C. Calderon, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and Fundraising chair, Ms Maribel Ongpin.

Philippine Airlines donated the major raffle prizes—plane tickets for two to Hong Kong and to Saigon. Hole sponsors include PNP Chief, TMS Shipping Agencies Inc., Landbank of the Philippines, Shell Philippines, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, DHL WW Express, Crystal Sugar, International Container Terminal Services Inc., Pagcor, Hon. Judy Jalbuena-Syjuco, Pediatrica and Villaraza and Angangco Law Firm.

Tournament proceeds will be used for the various CPU Net projects, including the funding of the 7th Asian Regional Conference of the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) entitled "I am for the Child!" on Sept. 23-26 at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza and a child abuse and neglect prevention tri-mediacampaign which started in October 2006 and is ongoing until October 2007.

CPU Net is a nongovernment organization of child protection units and physicians who manage abused and neglected children all over the Philippines. To date, CPU Net has established more than 25 units all over the country.

For details, call (632) 404-3954 or visit www.cpu-net.org.ph.

WORLD SLASHER CUP & THUNDERBIRD CONTINUE LONG-TIME PARTNERSHIP

On January 16, 18 & 20, 2007, Araneta Coliseum reverberates once more with fast-paced, action-packed cockfighting action with the staging of the 2007 edition of the World Slasher Cup 8-Cock International Derby.

Again, as in more than ten years, Thunderbird Power Feeds and Univet are at the forefront of the world-renowned event that pits the best and the finest cockers and gamefowl breeders from the United States, the Philippines and other countries as well.

Dicky Lim of El Nido, Palawan - known for his Winslet entry will be shooting for his third title after two successful tries in 2002 and January of last year.

Lim is currently an official endorser of Thunderbird Platinum and Thunderbird Multi-Grain Conditioner.

For this edition of the World Slasher Cup, Thunderbird Power Feeds and Univet will give recognition to an individual, an event and a group who can already be regarded as institutions in Philippine cockfighting.

First, is sentenciador (cockfights referee) Ramon "Berong" Javellana of Bago City, Negros Occidental for his exemplary devotion to his profession; his unquestionable honesty and fairness in performing his work; his being a role model and inspiration to his peers and his advocacy of maintaining the integrity of sentenciadors nationwide.

Second, is the National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders headed by Ricoy Palmares for their success in organizing and uniting the gamefowl breeders from all parts of the country and their record-breaking staging of the annual Bakbakan National Stag Derby – the prestige of which have driven hundreds of cockers to breed gamebirds of their own and motivated the rooster-raisers to strive more and improve their stocks. Bakbakan has also tremendously increased the level of activity in the local cocking scene to the benefit of commercial breeders; the agri-vet companies and all the businesses that supply products or services to the sport.

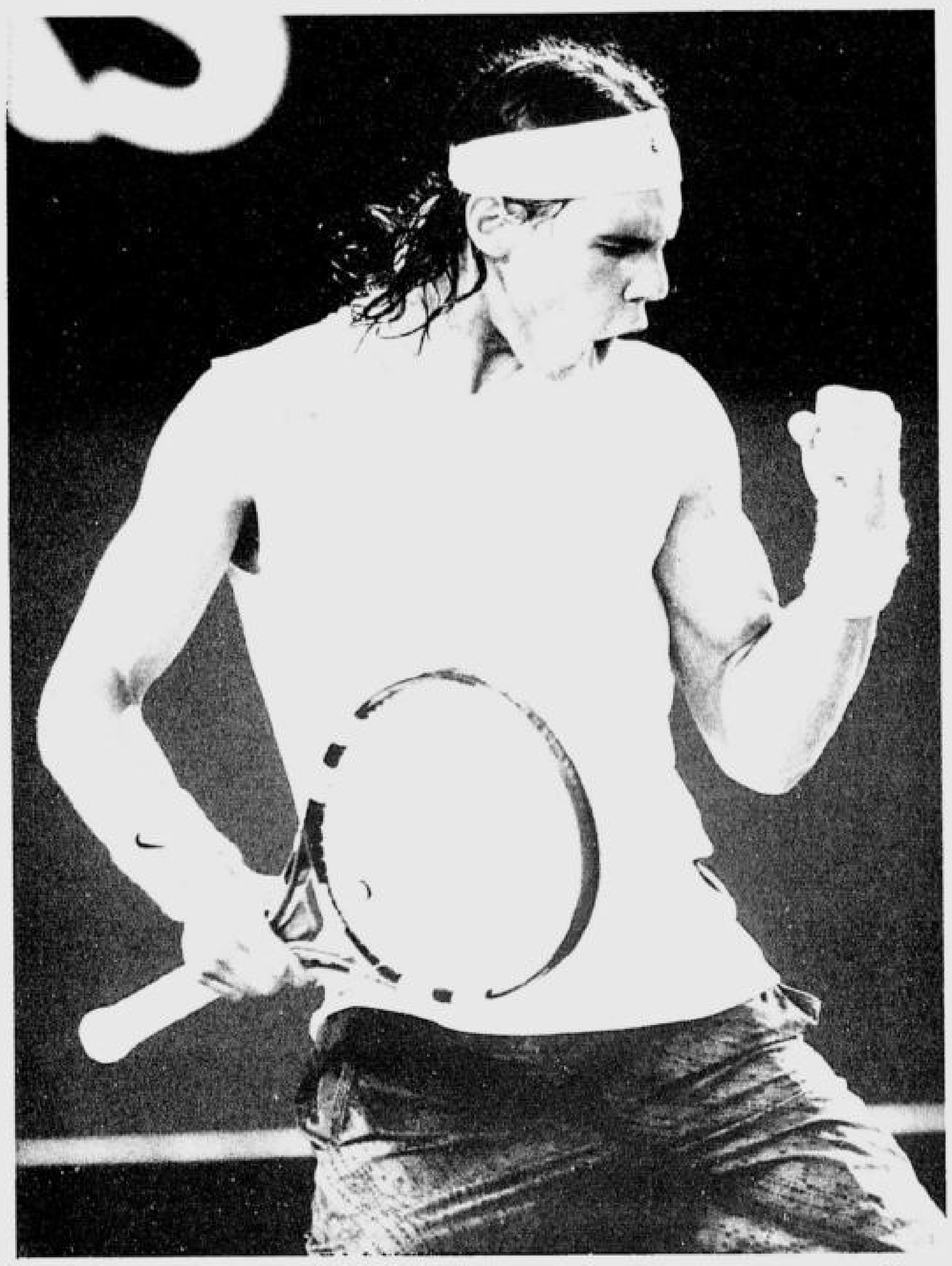
Third, is the World Slasher Cup and its organizers for popularizing Philippine cockfighting worldwide attracting the most prominent gamefowl breeders of America. Through the years, the World Slasher has also developed into a homecoming event for thousands of Pinoy sabungeros who are either OFWs or have acquired foreign citizenship, but remained Filipinos by heart because of their love for sabong. In the same manner, the grandeur and prestige of the World Slasher Cup has raised the public's respect not only for the sport, but for the sabungero as well.

ADVT.

SPORTS

Sharapova gets through heat, foe

Hingis, Clijsters, Nadal march on



SPAIN'S Rafael Nadal does his trademark fist-pumping act after disposing of first-round foe Robert Kendrick of the US at the Australian Open. AP

MELBOURNE—A RASH of errors and a broiling sun had top-seeded Maria Sharapova delusional, ailing and on the ropes.

But the Russian lived up to her reputation for fortitude, overcoming stomach cramps and an opponent who returned like a wall to advance Tuesday to the second round of the Australian Open on a day when organizers had to impose the Extreme Heat Policy.

The heat—36 C (97 F) at midday and rising above 38 C (100 F)—was even worse on the court surface, where Sharapova said it was 10 C (20 F) hotter as she held on to beat France's Camille Pin, 6-3, 4-6, 9-7.

"It's inhumanly possible to play three hours in that kind of heat," said Sharapova, seeking her third Grand Slam title and second in a row. "I don't think our bodies were made to do that.

"I was so delusional I couldn't think."

The heat policy, which measures conditions by combining the air and court surface temperatures, was invoked halfway through her match. No new matches were allowed to start on outside courts, and the roofs were closed on the two show courts once the ongoing matches were finished.

Eighth-seeded David Nalbandian grew stronger in the heat as Janko Tipsarevic wilted, but was critical of the decision to keep some matches going while others were delayed. Tipsarevic retired with heat exhaustion in the fifth—more than 90 minutes after he wasted his chance at serving for the match—with Nalbandian leading, 6-7 (5), 4-6, 7-6 (2), 6-0, 2-1.

TOASTED by the heat, Maria Sharapova digs deep into her reserves to hammer out a draining first-round victory over Camille Pin. AP

Frenchman Sebastien Grosjean led Christophe Rochus, 6-2, 4-1, when the Belgian retired because of breathing difficulties.

Playing indoors, second-seeded Rafael Nadal overcame American Robert Kendrick, 7-6 (6), 6-3, 6-2; women's No. 4 Kim Clijsters, who plans to retire at the end of the year to start a family, downed Vasilisa Bardina, 6-0, 6-0, in 44 minutes; and No. 6 Martina Hingis, a three-time winner here, beat Nathalie Dechy of France, 6-0, 6-2.

Fifth-seeded James Blake ousted Spain's Carlos Moya, 7-6 (8), 6-2, 6-4.

Sharapova appeared to have drawn a mismatch against Pin, who has only reached the second round twice in 15 majors. But the reigning US Open champion was battling herself, committing 24 unforced errors in the first seven games alone.

She frequently sought refuge in the shade at the back of the court between points, sometimes forcing Pin to wait to serve. Her high-pitched grunts lost their force, as did her groundstrokes.

"In the middle of the second set I started getting some pinches in my abdominal muscle," she said. "It didn't happen while I was hitting a stroke and it didn't feel like a cramp, so I kind of played with it."

Sharapova said the thought of retiring never crossed her mind.

"I'm not a quitter," she said. "I'm not just going to stop because of the heat." *AP*

No confrontation among fans this time

MELBOURNE—POLICE AT THE Australian Open reported no repeat Tuesday of the violent clashes between Serb and Croat fans that marred the first day's action, as players and the media condemned the ethnic violence.

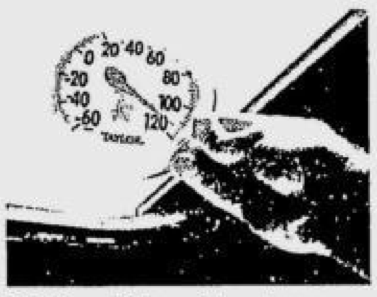
Police ejected 150 people Monday but fears a match Tuesday between Croat Marin Cilic and Serbian Ilia Bozoljac would provide another flashpoint proved unfounded when the game was delayed because of extreme heat.

Fans entering the venue had to pass through metal detectors amid threats from some of those thrown out Monday to return for more confrontation.

"We'll bring shanks (home-made knives) and stab every one of them," a Serb told the Melbourne Age newspaper.

Serbian star Ana Ivanovic said she and other players were shocked at the violent confrontation.

Ivanovic said Serb and Croat players got on well, echoing compatriot Jelena Jankovic, who said Monday that Melbourne was the only place she had seen tennis fans acting on the ancient Balkan rivalry. *AFP*



HEAT—which registered over 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43 degrees Celsius) at the Australian Open—may have prevented another round of violence. REUTERS

Webber ready to sign with Pistons

DETROIT, MICHIGAN—CHRIS Webber, a five-time NBA All-Star power forward, released a statement Monday saying he will sign with the Detroit Pistons once he clears waivers Tuesday.

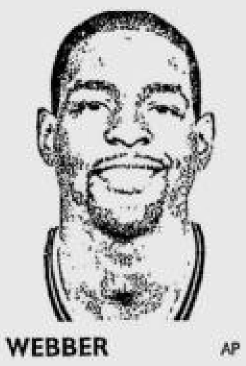
Webber said he would return to his hometown and play for the Pistons, whom he watched lose, 94-90, to Minnesota in overtime in a Monday home game.

"After careful thought and discussions with my family, I have decided I will sign with the Detroit Pistons," Webber said. "I thank all of the interested teams for their time and consideration.

"Joining the Pistons will allow me the opportunity to play the game I love in my hometown of Detroit, surrounded by my family."

Webber, 33, was released last week by the Philadelphia 76ers in exchange for a contract buyout worth a reported $37 million but must wait until Tuesday afternoon to clear waivers before he can sign a deal with any NBA club.

He reportedly also spoke to the Los Angeles Lakers and Miami Heat.



WEBBER AP

The return allows Webber, a college star at the University of Michigan with the "Fab Five" and a local youth hoops hero, to try to return the Pistons to their 2004 NBA title form.

"He's a multi-dimensional player who makes other people better," Pistons coach Flip Saunders said. "He's a great passer. Last year, he averaged 20 points and 10 rebounds, so he's still going to give you scoring inside and rebounding. He'll take some pressure off our other front line people."

At 21-15, the Pistons have the second-best record in the Eastern Conference, two games behind Cleveland.

"Of course he's going to bring a spark, but more importantly, another veteran, some more leadership for the ballclub," said Pistons forward Tayshaun Prince. "Great passer, very underrated passer, great passer in the post. He'll complement the other players on the team that are with him on the floor." *AFP*

Kobe, Cook power Lakers past Heat

LOS ANGELES—KOBE BRYANT SCORED SIX of his 25 points in overtime, Brian Cook also had 25 including the go-ahead 3-pointer, and the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Miami Heat 124-118 in the NBA on Monday.

Bryant added eight assists—the last one setting up Cook for a 3-pointer that gave the Lakers a 117-114 lead with 2:34 left in overtime.

The Lakers shot 14-of-25 from beyond the arc. Cook also had 10 rebounds, a season-high four assists and three blocked shots.

Smush Parker scored 17 points, Maurice Evans added 12, Andrew Bynum and Vladimir Radmanovic scored 11 each, and Luke Walton had 10 points and 10 rebounds for the Lakers.

Dwyane Wade led the Heat with 35 points and eight assists. Udonis Haslem added 20 points and 11 rebounds, James Posey scored 16, and Alonzo Mourning had a season-high 15 rebounds.

In Washington, Gilbert Arenas had 51 points, including a 3-pointer as the final horn sounded, and the Wizards snapped a two-game losing streak by nipping the Utah Jazz, 114-111.

Carlos Boozer's putback of Derek Fisher's 3-point airball tied the score at 111 for Utah with 11 seconds left.

Arenas took the ensuing inbounds pass and launched the game-winner over Deron Williams, eclipsing the 50-point mark for the third time in his career, all this season. He shot 14-for-29 from the field and 16-for-17 at the free-throw line.

Caron Butler had 21 points and seven rebounds for the Wizards, who won their eighth straight at home. Brendan Haywood added 10 points and 10 rebounds.

Mehmet Okur led Utah with a career-high 38 points and nine rebounds. Boozer added 27 points and 13 rebounds, giving him five double-doubles in the past six games. Williams added 12 points and 13 assists.

In Charlotte, North Carolina, diminutive playmaker Earl Boykins scored 30 points and Andrew Bogut added a career-high 27 points and 11 rebounds to lead a banged-up Milwaukee Bucks over the Hornets, 99-91.

The Bucks, minus four starters, snapped a five-game losing streak behind the 5-foot-5 Boykins, acquired from Denver last week.

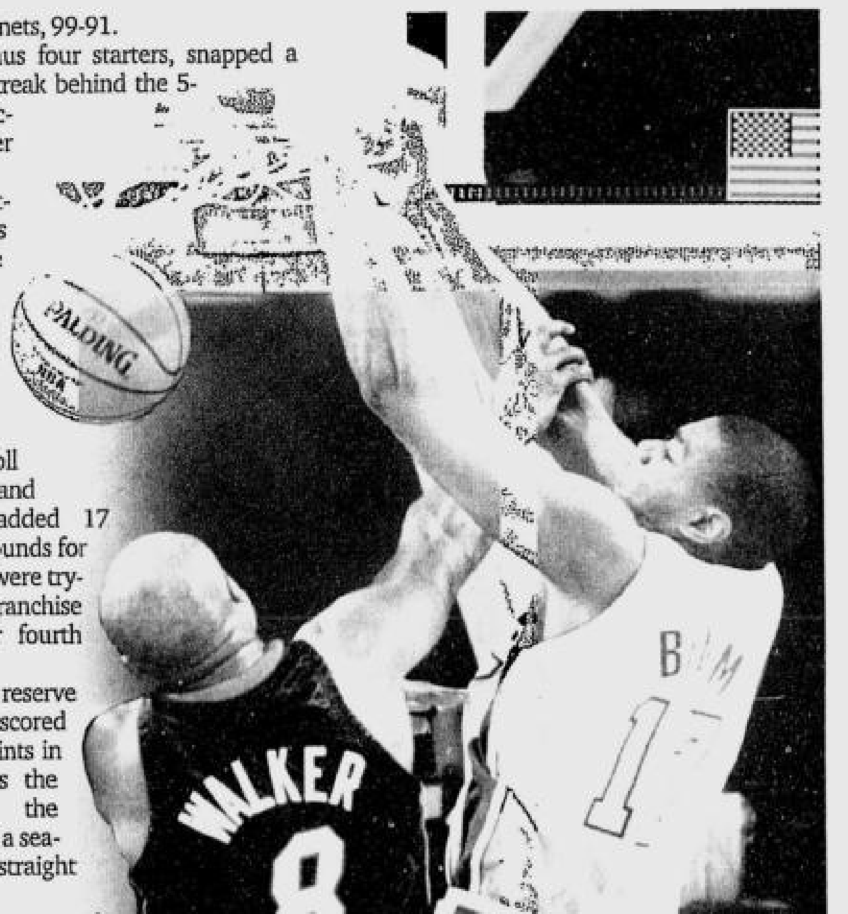
Boykins' 3-pointer with 4 minutes left snapped a tie and put Milwaukee ahead to stay. His shot in the lane with 1:46 left gave the Bucks a 94-88 lead.

Matt Carroll scored 22 points, and Emeka Okafor added 17 points and 12 rebounds for the Bobcats, who were trying to match a franchise record with their fourth straight win.

In New York, reserve Jamal Crawford scored eight of his 10 points in the final 1:07 as the Knicks handed the Sacramento Kings a season-high sixth straight loss, 102-97.

Stephon Marbury scored 25 points, Eddy Curry added 24 points and 10 rebounds, and David Lee finished with 15 points and 12 boards for the Knicks. *AP*

COMPLETE RESULTS: Washington 114, Utah 111; New York 102, Sacramento 97; Milwaukee 99, Charlotte 91; Atlanta 100, Boston 96; Chicago 99, San Antonio 87; Toronto 104, Philadelphia 86; New Jersey 105, Indiana 95; Minnesota 94, Detroit 90, OT; Golden State 108, LA Clippers 93; Phoenix 137, Memphis 122; LA Lakers 124, Miami 118, OT



LOS ANGELES Lakers rookie Andrew Bynum (right) dunks against Miami Heat's Antoine Walker during the second half of their NBA basketball game in Los Angeles. REUTERS

MORE AND MORE FILIPINOS ARE SAYING GOODBYE TO HAIR LOSS—THANKS TO NU/HART

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Stocks surge to highest in nearly 10 years

INDICATORS

P 48.725 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Jan. 16, 2007

Low treasury bill yields force shift to equities

By Michelle V. Remo

STOCK PRICES ROSE 1.7 PERCENT HIGHER YESTERDAY to finish at their best level since early 1997 on continuing hopes that faster economic growth will boost corporate earnings, dealers said.

The record-low interest rates fetched by fixed-income treasury bills have also prompted a shift in interest to stocks.

The latest gains take the market back to the days before the Asian financial crisis exploded in July 1997 and put the Philippines and the region as a whole on the rack.

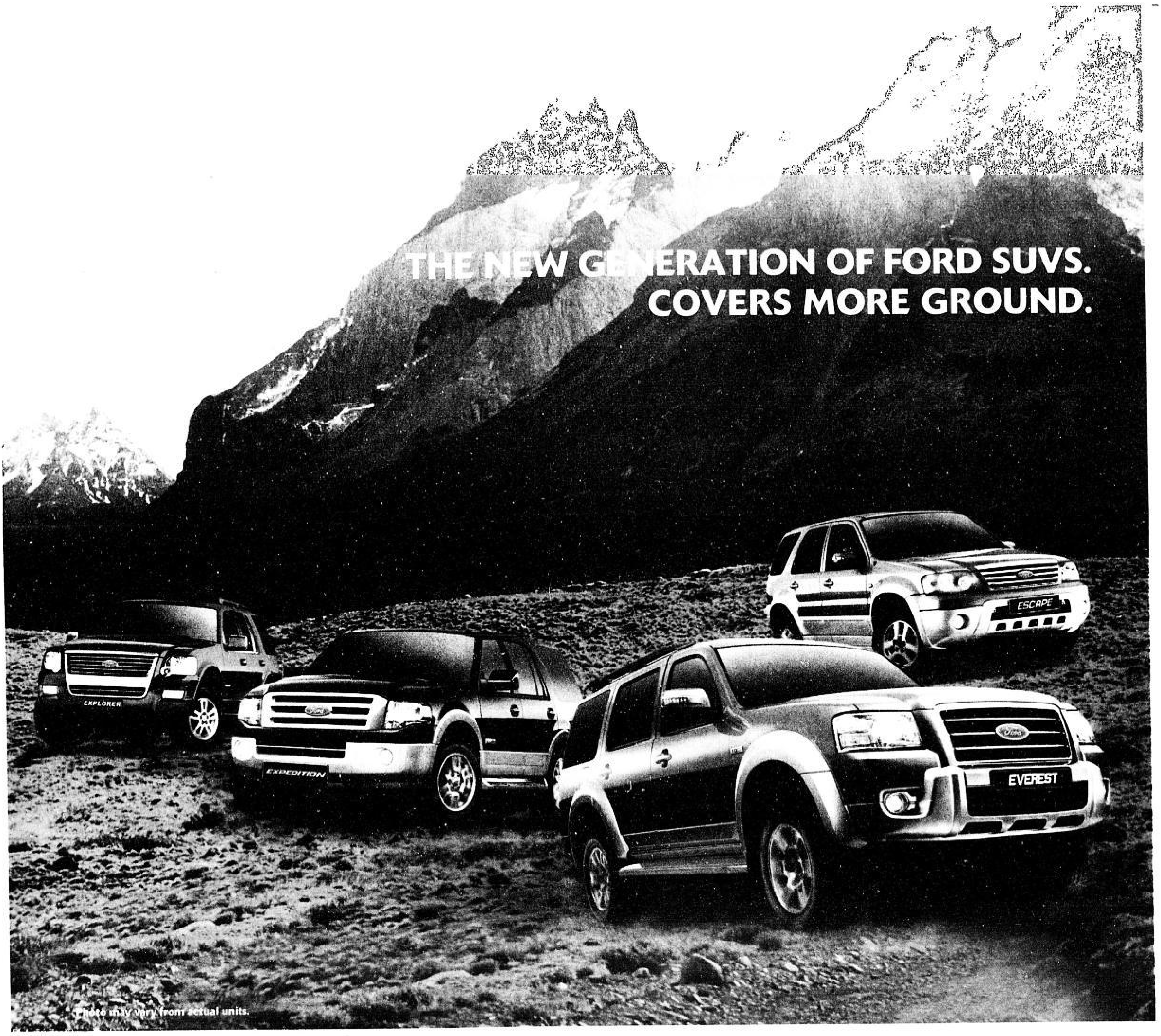
The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 51.23 points to 3,070.29 points, its highest finish since April 3, 1997, when it settled at 3,104.77.

The broader all-share index jumped 31.96 points to 1,920.24.

There were 71 gainers and 32 losers, with 61 stocks unchanged.

Turnover was 2.5 billion shares

STOCKS/ B2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Dollar deposits in banks hit $18B

Putting money in FCDUs becoming more attractive, says bank exec

By Doris C. Dumlao

DEPOSITS HELD BY PHILIPPINE BANKS' FOREIGN currency deposit units (FCDUs) surged to a record high of $18.02 billion as of Dec. 22, up from the previous week's $17.94 billion, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said.

The BSP said the December level was also 13.4 percent higher than year-ago's $15.9 billion.

The week-on-week increase was attributed to additional deposits from the construction and engineering sectors.

FCDU deposits, considered as the country's secondary layer of foreign exchange reserves, usually attract more funds whenever the peso is depreciating against the US dollar. Those earning in dollars opt to park their funds in FCDUs, instead of converting into pesos right away, in anticipation of higher exchange rates in the future.

In this case, however, the FCDU level rose despite the strengthening of the peso. Bankers believe this can be due to the strong influx of foreign portfolio and direct investments. Also, they said the sharp decline in the local interest rates as against offshore benchmarks prompted investors to shift back to FCDU assets despite a weak US dollar.

Veteran banker and former Prime Minister Cesar Virata said that despite the market's generally bullish view on the peso and a bearish view on the US dollar, it was now becoming more attractive to put money in FCDUs.

"Despite the weak dollar, (net) interest yields there (in FCDUs) are higher," Virata said.

Virata said FCDUs would lure more investors given the negative rate differentials between local and foreign-denominated assets.

The national government, for its part, could take advantage of the low interest rates to reduce its foreign borrowings more aggressively and tap domestic sources, UP economist and former Socioeconomic Planning chief Felipe Medalla said.

Bank lending growth slowed to 6.8% in Nov.

COMMERCIAL BANK LENDING GREW AT A slower pace of 6.8 percent year-on-year in November versus the eight-year high of 11.1 percent posted in October, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

"While this was a deceleration from the double-digit growth in October, it nonetheless maintained the higher pace of lending that began in the third quarter of 2006," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said in a report yesterday.

The total outstanding loans amounted to P1.68 trillion as of end-November. On a month-on-month basis, the growth of commercial bank loans slowed to one percent from 4.3 percent in the previous month.

"The growth in commercial bank lending continued to be driven by loans to the financial institutions, real estate and business services sector, even as the sector registered a slower growth rate of 26.9 percent from 40.5 percent in the previous month," Tetangco said.

Other sectors also registered increases namely, the community, social and personal services sector (8.4 percent); electricity, gas and water sector (5.3 percent); transport, storage, and communications sector (2.5 percent), and wholesale and retail trade industry (1.8 percent).

The growth in lending to these sectors was, however, offset by the decline in the level of loans to mining and quarrying, manufacturing, construction and agriculture.

"Credit is an important channel of monetary policy in the Philippines. Monetary authorities will continue to foster conditions supportive of lending to the productive sectors of the economy, while ensuring that liquidity and credit conditions are consistent with the government's price stability objective," Tetangco said. *Doris C. Dumlao*

Lopezes' Spanish partner may raise stake in Meralco

By Abigail L. Ho

SPANISH UTILITY FIRM UNION FENOSA SA is considering increasing its stake in the Lopez-led Manila Electric Co., but only if the energy industry—particularly the regulatory sector—becomes more stable, Meralco chair and chief executive Manuel Lopez said.

In 2005, the Spanish firm had considered pulling out its Philippine investments in light of the many unfavorable things that had happened to the Lopez-led distribution utility.

Lopez had to go to Spain that year to convince officials of Union Fenosa not to give up on the Philippines.

Union Fenosa in 1994 took a 9-percent stake in Meralco. First Philippine Union Fenosa Inc., a joint venture between the Spanish utility and the Lopezes' First Philippine Holdings Corp., hold 22.8 percent of Meralco's common shares.

Earlier, Meralco was ordered by the court to refund customers some P30 billion in overcharges from 1994 to 2003. The court also reversed the Energy Regulatory Commission's approval of its rates unbundling application, which effectively nullified a rate increase hike that came with it.

In December last year, however, the Supreme Court overturned the Court of Appeals decision, and instead ordered the ERC to call for an audit of Meralco's books by the Commission on Audit, to determine whether or not the rate hike was justified.

The favorable Supreme Court decision prompted Meralco to declare a P1-per-share cash dividend to common stockholders as of Jan. 10. It will be paid on Feb. 5.

Lopez said his group was now looking at the possibility of acquiring the government's 29-percent stake in Meralco, which might be offered for sale this year.

The Department of Finance expects to raise for the government P25.7 billion from the sale of the state's interests in various companies, including Meralco, San Miguel Corp. and Philippine Telecommunication Investments Corp., which has a 14-percent stake in the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.

Stocks surge to highest ...

From page B1

worth P4.4 billion. The peso traded at 48.789 to the dollar.

"Investors continued to accumulate stocks given their optimism for the economic outlook this year," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings.

"This outlook is supported by the expansion plans of many companies for this year. Also, there are indications that corporate earnings in 2006 were generally within expectations," he added.

Dealers said that technically, the market has moved out of a consolidation range and would likely test higher resistance levels in coming sessions.

However, they said they are not ruling out a correction soon after the market takes a breather following a three-day rise.

Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. advanced a peso to P56 but top-traded Philippine Long Distance Telephone fell P5 to P2,435.

Property developer Ayala Land Inc. rose a peso to P16.50 and parent Ayala Corp. was up P25 at P610.

Food and beverage firm San Miguel Corp.'s A-shares were unchanged at P64 but its B-shares fell a peso to P78.

The recent drop in treasury bill rates to all-time lows is expected to force fund managers to shift investments away from fixed-income securities to higher-yielding but riskier instruments like stocks.

Paul Joseph Garcia, newly elected president of the Fund Managers Association of the Philippines (FMAP), said fund managers were now challenged to develop more creative investment portfolios for their clients to compensate for the low yields of fixed-income investment instruments.

"We have to engage more in alternative investments that are not concentrated on fixed-income. One of these is a hybrid investment, a portfolio which combines fixed-income and equities," Garcia said.

Garcia, also chief investment officer of ING Bank, explained that with the current environment of low interest rates, the share of fixed-income securities in an investment portfolio should be smaller.

"Investing in stocks is more attractive today relative to fixed-income," Garcia said. More fund managers are increasing the share of equities in their clients' investment portfolio.

In last week's auction for treasury bills, all short-term government securities dropped to their historic lows in what fiscal authorities claim to be a result of optimism arising from the strengthening macroeconomic fundamentals.

The 91-day rate, used as a benchmark in pricing bank loans, touched the 3-percent level and fetched 3.795 percent. The 182- and the 364-day bills yielded record lows of 4.317 percent and 4.604 percent, respectively.

Faced with a challenging low-interest rate environment, Garcia said, fund managers were now setting their eyes on the so-called real estate investment trust (RIT). The RIT will be one form of deviation from fixed-income securities, he said.

"We are just waiting for the guidelines (on investing) on the RIT, which is now popular in other countries in the region," Garcia said.

He explained that RIT is a pool of individuals' funds that are invested in real estate projects such as malls, hotels and condominium buildings. *With a report from AFP*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of January 16, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.2	53,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	46.5	47	46	46.5	2,446,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	69.5	70	69	69.5	1,752,800
China Banking Corp.	685	695	685	690	2,760
Chinatrust Comm. Bank	20.75	21.5	20.75	21.5	25,000
Citystate Savings Bank	19.25	19.25	19.25	19.25	400
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.47	0.5	0.47	0.49	21,420,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	80.5	82	80.5	82	112,700
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	56	56.5	55.5	56	4,738,600
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	49	49	49	49	300
Philippine National Bank	47	47	47	47	92,200
Phil. Savings Bank	48	49	48	49	37,400
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	29.5	30	29	30	149,300
Security Bank Corp.	67	68.5	67	68.5	327,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	52	54	52	54	80,400
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	580,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	5	5	4.95	5	262,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9	4,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	30	31.5	30	30.5	40,300
Manulife Financial Corp.	1650	1650	1650	1650	10
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.48	1.52	1.48	1.5	989,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	300	300	300	300	750
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2010	2035	2010	2035	1,230
Ivantage Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	2,814,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	38,961,000
First Gen Corp.	55.5	56	55.5	56	3,454,100
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	77	79.5	77	78.5	2,264,900
Manila Electric Co. A	58	60	58	59.5	657,200
Manila Electric Co. B	59	60.5	58.5	60.5	984,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.1	9.3	8.9	8.9	4,421,000
Petron Corp.	4.15	4.2	4.15	4.15	6,146,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	1,170,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	302,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	153,000
CADP Group Corp.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	21	21.25	21	21	115,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	45	45.5	45	45	989,300
RFM Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	76,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.85	2.9	2.85	2.9	181,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	10,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64.5	63.5	64	82,600
San Miguel Corp. B	79	79	78	78	88,100
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2	2.06	1.98	2.04	2,309,000
Universal Robina Corp.	19.5	19.5	18.75	18.75	1,350,300
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.26	1.3	1.24	1.3	41,309,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	3.8	4.2	3.8	4.15	6,214,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.3	8.4	8.3	8.3	889,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	6	6	6	6	2,000
Republic Cement Corp.	4.45	4.5	4.4	4.4	382,000
Supercity Rlty Dev. Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	1,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.5	5.6	5.3	5.4	7,325,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	100,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.74	0.76	0.73	0.75	39,850,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.215	0.215	5,500,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0095	0.01	0.0095	0.01	162,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	10,000,000
Ayala Corp.	585	610	585	610	249,860
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.67	0.68	510,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.8	9.7	8.8	9.4	4,747,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.065	0.0675	0.065	0.0675	2,300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	380,000
APC Group Inc.	0.41	0.43	0.41	0.41	22,930,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	38,900,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.04	1,280,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.8	1.8	39,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	3.3	3.35	3.3	3.35	63,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	14,600
Benpres Holdings Corp.	2.95	3	2.9	2.9	20,305,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	6.6	6.8	6.6	6.8	776,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.65	4.7	4.65	4.65	490,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.31	0.33	360,000
House of Investments Inc.	2.12	2.24	2.1	2.22	4,300,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.75	11.25	11.75	1,218,300
Keppel Holdings	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	1,000
Medco Holdings	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	950,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.32	150,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	4.75	4.95	4.75	4.8	983,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.96	2	1.9	2	7,827,000
Pacifica	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.022	17,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.195	0.195	300,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.72	0.73	0.72	0.72	1,900,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	1,380,000
Sm Investments Corp.	325	340	325	340	349,470
South China Resources Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	110,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	184,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	1,300,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.14	360,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.75	16.5	15.75	16.5	13,532,100
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	300,000
Belle Corp.	1.22	1.24	1.2	1.22	2,643,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.7	1.74	1.68	1.72	1,188,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.48	0.5	0.48	0.49	5,760,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.25	3.35	3.2	3.3	745,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.7	1.8	1.66	1.68	2,308,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	1.86	1.86	1.86	1.86	50,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	690,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.215	0.23	0.215	0.215	1,180,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.68	0.69	0.66	0.66	50,620,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.7	1.62	1.7	15,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	6,200,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.72	1.74	1.68	1.7	62,879,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	200,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	700,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.46	2.46	2.46	2.46	5,000
Interport Res. B	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	80,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.55	0.56	0.55	0.55	9,020,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.86	0.87	0.83	0.83	6,380,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.38	2.4	2.36	2.38	40,708,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	104,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	90,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	4,100,000
Polar Property Holdings	1.7	2.2	1.7	2.2	11,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	15.5	15.75	15.25	15.75	1,418,800
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.69	0.74	0.69	0.72	31,770,000
SM Development Corp.	3.55	3.55	3.4	3.45	1,872,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	9,941,200
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.58	0.6	390,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.105	0.1	0.105	160,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	19	20	19	20	278,900
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.98	2	1.98	1.98	4,335,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1180	1195	1180	1190	92,030
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.5	8,401,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2450	2465	2435	2435	578,340
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.24	0.24	73,320,000
Imperial Res	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.021	46,500,000
Ionics Inc.	2.6	2.65	2.5	2.55	1,514,000
IPVG Corp.	4	4	3.85	3.85	180,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.05	0.0525	0.05	0.0525	1,700,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.06	0.06	0.0575	0.06	12,200,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.42	1.42	105,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.48	2.5	2.36	2.36	952,000
Philweb Corp.	0.034	0.034	0.033	0.034	42,900,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	3.9	4	3.9	4	246,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	24.75	24.75	24.5	24.5	580,500
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.14	2.14	470,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.59	0.61	0.59	0.61	1,140,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.1	2.1	165,000
Paxys Inc.	20.25	20.25	20	20	759,600
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3	55,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	77,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	100,900,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9	9.3	9	9.3	1,420,000
Benguet Corp. B	28	28	28	28	400
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.55	242,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.25	0.26	0.25	0.25	4,910,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	220,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.024	515,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	322,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.012	408,900,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.75	3.8	5,990,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	453,700
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.68	0.69	0.68	0.69	620,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.48	1.48	1.44	1.44	1,250,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	700,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	124,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	300,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	600,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	560,000
Pnoc Exploration Corp.-B	24	24	24	24	1,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10.25	11	10.25	10.75	921,200

CURRENCIES

January 16, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.772678	1.000000	48.8610
Japan	Yen	0.006418	0.008306	0.4058
United Kingdom	Pound	1.518390	1.965100	96.0168
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.099081	0.128230	6.2654
Switzerland	Franc	0.619034	0.801154	39.1452
Canada	Dollar	0.662390	0.857265	41.8868
Singapore	Dollar	0.501251	0.648719	31.6971
Australia	Dollar	0.605215	0.783269	38.2713
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.049490	2.652450	129.6014
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.206168	0.266823	13.0372
Brunei	Dollar	0.499630	0.646621	31.5945
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000110	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.021571	0.027917	1.3641
UAE	Dirham	0.210401	0.272301	13.3049
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.294200	63.2359
Korea	Won	0.000824	0.001066	0.0521
China	Yuan**	0.099166	0.128340	6.2708
Argentina	Peso	0.250869	0.324675	15.8639
Brazil	Real	0.361065	0.467290	22.8323
Denmark	Kroner	0.134169	0.173641	8.4843
India	Rupee	0.017481	0.022624	1.1054
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220481	0.285347	13.9423
Mexico	New Peso	0.070503	0.091245	4.4583
New Zealand	Dollar	0.535912	0.693577	33.8889
Norway	Kroner	0.120121	0.155461	7.5960
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012672	0.016400	0.8013
South Africa	Rand	0.107138	0.138658	6.7750
Sweden	Kroner	0.110151	0.142558	6.9655
Syria	Pound	0.014885	0.019264	0.9413
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023591	0.030532	1.4918
Venezuala	Bolivar	0.000360	0.000466	0.0228

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NISSAN

T-bond rate down to 6.5%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE YIELD ON THE 10-year treasury bonds dropped to 6.518 percent during yesterday's auction, down 208.7 basis points from the 8.605 percent recorded in the last auction in September last year.

"The market is very optimistic and it is expressed in [yesterday's] trading," National Treasurer Omar Cruz told reporters in a briefing after the auction.

The bonds sold yesterday were a reissue of the 10-year benchmark bonds sold last year.

The Bureau of the Treasury last year issued 3, 5, 7 and 10-year benchmark bonds, which were swapped with old government securities.

The appetite for the 10-year bonds was healthy, as tenders reached P20.958 billion, making the government securities over-subscribed by more than two times.

The Bureau of the Treasury accepted P6 billion worth of tenders, in accordance with its borrowing program.

Cruz said the high level of cash in the market also influenced the drop in the interest rate.

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12 months	3.88%	4.00%	4.13%	4.25%

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- Channel Selection
- Channel Relationship Marketing

III. Sales and Distribution Operations
- Sales Force Effectiveness: The Four Rs
- Selecting, Recruiting and Developing People
- Performance Standards and Incentive Scheme

IV. Distributor Operations
- Designing the Distribution Infrastructure
- Perfect Order Delivery
- Distribution Controls and Management Information Systems

V. Distribution Finance
- Understanding Distribution Finance
- Sourcing, Allocating and Using Funds
- Working Capital and Capital Investment Management

VI. Building Businesses and Brands
- Evaluating Principals and Products
- Beyond Distribution: Co-Brand Building
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Just last year, Excel Coil Coating Corporation saw its distinction rose one level higher when it partnered with Akzo Nobel, the world leader in paint technology.

Officially based in the Netherlands, Akzo Nobel is active in three business areas namely, pharmaceuticals, coatings and chemicals and is present in more than 80 countries.

"We saw the market's need for innovative roofing solutions and Akzo Nobel has the technology to provide our roofs the quality that would make it last up to 25 years, "says Excel Coil President, Edwin Chua.

Chua is referring to a new state-of-the-art paint technology, known as polyvinylidene fluoride (PVdF). This is evident in Excel Coil's exclusive roofing solutions namely TileStar, RibStar, CorrStar, CladStar and StarLock.

Having the most advanced coil-coating line in the country serves as big leap and a considerable advantage for the company over its competitors.

Akzo Nobel has also approved Excel Coil to utilize the following paint system technologies like High Durable Polyester and Silicon Modified Polyester aside from the PVdF.

The PVdF offers coating that is good resistance to wear, chipping, cracking, peeling, weather, and with excellent anti-ultraviolet ray properties, which it perfect to roof products of Excel Coil.

Another competitive advantage Chua shares of their products is that the new paint system prevents fine dirt and other particles from bonding to the building surface even in the very hot humid environments of Southeast Asia. As such, the company has successfully covered almost all markets: industrial, commercial and residential.

"In effect, these particles remain 'loose' on the surface and are easily washed away with subsequent rainfall. In ordinary pre-painted roofing products, these particles accumulate to form permanent and unsightly stains on the surface," reveals Chua, adding that Excel Coil is the only company in the Philippines capable of employing this technology.

Significantly, there was an increase in the number of residential clients who are opting for their type of roof because its more effective in the long run.

Even furthering its impressive roofing technology, Excel Coil also offers a wide range of building solutions for walling, fencing, home improvements, structural solutions, rainwater solutions, and house and framing solutions.

"Our company is constantly in touch with building contractors, architects, distributors, and dealers, as well as homeowners. This interaction has provided us valuable knowledge on how we can better assist our clients in their needs," relates Mr. Chua.

Excel Coil has branches and roll-forming operations in Cebu, Pampanga and Cavite, apart from its partner dealers and distributors nationwide.

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
CENTRAL OFFICE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Building 6, San Lazaro Compound, Rizal Avenue, Sta. Cruz, 1003 Manila
Trunk Line 743-8301 locals 1625, 1628, 1650 & 1652;
Fax: 741-9775; 743-8301 local 1651

11 January 2007

Request for Expressions of Interest

The Republic of the Philippines through Department of Health (DOH) under the Health Sector Development Project has applied for a Loan with the Asian Development Bank and intends to apply part of the proceeds to payments under the following contract:

Position	Qualifications
Detailed Architectural and Engineering Design – Ilocos Norte	
1. Civil Engineer – (Team Leader) (IFB-CS-FAP-2007-1)	• Post graduate on civil engineering related to building construction, preferable • Graduate of Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering • Licensed Civil Engineer • At least 10 years cumulative experience in building construction, design of buildings and project management • With experience as Team Leader of a building construction work.
2. Architect (IFB-CS-FAP-2007-2)	• Graduate of B.S. Architecture • Licensed Architecture • At least 10 years cumulative experience in architectural design of buildings
3. Professional Electrical Engineer (IFB-CS-FAP-2007-3)	• Graduate of B.S. Electrical Engineering • Licensed Electrical Engineer • At least 5 years cumulative experience in electrical design of buildings
4. Licensed Sanitary Engineer (IFB-CS-FAP-2007-4)	• Graduate of B.S. Sanitary Engineering • At least 5 years cumulative experience in the sanitary/ plumbing design of buildings and waste management systems • Licensed Sanitary Engineer
Detailed Architectural and Engineering Design – Oriental Mindoro	
5. Civil Engineer – (Team Leader) (IFB-CS-FAP-2007-5)	• Post graduate on civil engineering related to building construction, preferable • Graduate of Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering • Licensed Civil Engineer • At least 10 years cumulative experience in building construction, design of buildings and project management • With experience as Team Leader of a building construction work.
6. Structural Engineer (IFB-CS-FAP-2007-6)	• Graduate of B.S. Civil Engineering with specialization on structural analysis of buildings • At least 5 years cumulative experience in structural design of buildings • Licensed Civil Engineer
7. Architect (IFB-CS-FAP-2007-7)	• Graduate of B.S. Architecture • Licensed Architecture • At least 10 years cumulative experience in architectural design of buildings
8. Professional Electrical Engineer (IFB-CS-FAP-2007-8)	• Graduate of B.S. Electrical Engineering • Licensed Electrical Engineer • At least 5 years cumulative experience in electrical design of buildings
9. Licensed Sanitary Engineer (IFB-CS-FAP-2007-9)	• Graduate of B.S. Sanitary Engineering • At least 5 years cumulative experience in the sanitary/plumbing design of buildings and waste management systems • Licensed Sanitary Engineer
10. Mechanical Engineer (IFB-CS-FAP-2007-10)	• Graduate of B.S. Mechanical Engineering • Licensed Mechanical Engineer • At least 5 years cumulative experience in the design of mechanical systems in buildings
11. Geodetic Engineer (IFB-CS-FAP-2007-11)	• Graduate of B.S. Geodetic Engineering • At least 5 years cumulative experience in surveying • Licensed Geodetic Engineer

The DOH now invites qualified individuals to express interest in providing the above-services. Experessions of interest and curriculum vitae shall be sent to the address below by no later than 22 January 2007.

ALEXANDER A. PADILLA
Undersecretary of Health
Chairperson, Central Office Bids and Awards Committee
Department of Health Building 6, San Lazaro Compound,
Sta. Cruz, Manila 1003
Tel# 7438301 loc. 1650-1652
Telefax No. 743-8301 Loc. 1651

The DOH reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and/or reject all bids at any time prior to award of contract without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground to the DOH.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **ALEXANDER A. PADILLA**
Undersecretary of Health
Chairperson, COBAC

(PDI–Jan. 17, 2007)

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Please send your resumé with 2x2 photo to P.O. box 4236 Manila.

FOR SALE

REPOSSESSED VEHICLES

Type	Indicative Selling Price
Mitsubishi L-200, 1997 Blue, Diesel	P188,000.00

Deadline for submission of offer is on January 22, 2007.

For inquiries, please call
UNITED COCONUT PLANTERS BANK
Asset Management and Disposition Division
Hotline No. 811-9797
UCPB

INVITATION TO BID

One (1) Unit "10 Wheeler used Isuzu GIGA" (drop side Truck)
January 19, 2007, 2:00 p.m. @ MASCO Office
For particulars, pls. contact:
Ding Placido &/or Tina Banal
@ MASCO 840-3669 / 813-0719

(PDI–Jan. 17, 2007)

FOR SALE

Location : #55 Don E. Floro St., BF Homes, Parañaque City
Lot Area : 269 sqms. more or less
Classification : residential lot w/ improvement
Floor Price : P3,225,600.00

Note: Prices are subject to change without prior notice.

For inquiries, please call:
UCPB Savings Bank
SPECIAL ASSETS MANAGEMENT TEAM
Contact Person: Lulu Rodriguez
Telephone Nos. 811-9000 local 7243

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
WALES INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF MANILA INC. JNCV Bldg., Pasig Blvd., cor. Rosemary Lane, Kapitolyo, Pasig City	Eunhee Ko	Voluntary Teacher (Art)
SOUTH SEA LANGUAGE CENTER CORP. Unit-A, 8/F, 4980 P. Guanzon St., Brgy. Poblacion, Makati City	Eung Ryul Park	General Manager
ACCENTURE, INC. MSE Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Loganathan Krishnappanaidu	Project Analyst
IASA, INC. 25/F RCBC Plaza, Ayala Ave. cor. Sen. G. Puyat Ave., Makati City	Hong Sik Namkoong	Account Executive
TOON CITY ANIMATION, INC. 2nd Level, FMF Business Center, 126 Pioneer St., Mandaluyong City	Mary Richardson Thorne	Unit Producer
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F, Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Mangesh Rajaram Jambhale	Functional Analyst
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F, Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Rahul Chakrabarti	Functional Analyst
APAC CUSTOMER SERVICES, INC. -PHIL. BRANCH 4/F Plaza C, Northgate Cyberzone Filinvest Corporate City, Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Ligaya Ann Solomon	Workforce Manager
THE PUREFOODS-HORMEL COMPANY, INC. 21/F The JMT Corporate Condominium, ADB Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Rickey Cole Ostgulen	Corporate Manager of Mergers and Acquisitions
REAL COOL TRADING CO. INC. Pas I-A3 Galleria Shopping Center, Baclaran, Pasay City	Guose Cai	Technical Consultant
WONDERPHIL CONSULTANT CORP. Unit F 7/F, Westgate Tower, Madrigal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Hyunmi Jung (w/o Lim)	Head Supervisor

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–Jan. 17, 2007)

National Irrigation Administration
Region VI, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City

Contract Ref No. : NIAR6-NDC-PRIS-CW03-06
Name of the Contract : Rehabilitation of Pangipian RIS
Location of the Contract : Payao, Binalbagan, Negros Occidental

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Irrigation Administration, Region VI, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for Eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder Contract:

Name of Contract	Rehabilitation of Panggipian RIS
Location	Payao, Binalbagan, Negros Occidental
Brief Description	Canal desilting, canal lining and irrigation service road resurfacing of existing irrigation network
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Php 12,518,788.73
Contract Duration	90 Calendar Days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria in the Eligibility Check / Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct "Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

	BAC Activities	Schedule		
		TIME	DATE	VENUE
1.	Receipt from prospective Bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Jan. 10-24, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
2.	Issuance of Eligibility Forms	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Jan. 10-24, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
3.	Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Jan. 11-24, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
4.	Notice of Results of Eligibility Check		Jan. 29, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
5.	Issuance of Bid Documents	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Jan. 30, Feb. 6, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
6.	Pre-bid Conference	10:15 AM	Feb. 6, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
7.	Receipt and Opening of Bids	10:15 AM	Feb. 16, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at the National Irrigation Regional Office 6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City, upon submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 500.00 to the NIA Region VI Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 2,500.00 to the National Irrigation Administration Region VI Cashier.

The National Irrigation Administration assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The National Irrigation Administration reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved
(Sgd.) OLIVER A. CERVANTES
BAC Chairman

(PDI – January 10 & 17, 2007)

FOR SALE

A1 Condition Tooling Machines

GRINDER - BRAND: ACRA/OKAMOTO
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INTERESTED PARTY MAY CALL:
896-1381/87 LOC. 206

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CALL AT
724-3649

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that the Amended Articles of Incorporation of PEARL ASIA APPAREL CORPORATION shortening the term of existence up to 31 January 2007 thereby dissolving the said corporation on said date have been approved by the Board of Directors.

All persons having claims against said corporation are requested to present the same at the 868 Champaca Road Extension UPS IV Subd., Km. 19 South Super Hi-way, Parañaque City for immediate settlement.

This announcement will serve as notice to all concerned of the legal dissolution of the aforesaid corporation.

(Sgd.) Josellito John G. Blando
Corporate Secretary

(PDI–Jan. 17, 24 & 31, 2007)

POEA
24-HR HOTLINES
722-1144
722-1155

ILOILO II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(ILECO II)
Pototan, Iloilo

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFICATION AND TO BID

ILECO II is inviting interested contractors to apply for accreditation and to bid for the SUPPLY OF MATERIALS AND LABOR of the following in line with the improvement of Distribution System Efficiency, Quality and Reliability:

Lot A. Substation Package
- 69 KV Protection and Metering, 15 KV Switchgear Type Protection and Metering
- Not Included are Power Transformer, ground matting and civil works

Lot B. 69 KV Pototan-Janiuay Subtransmission Line (About 14 KM)
Detailed specifications of Lot A and B will be provided in the bid documents

Activities	Schedule
Accreditation of contractors	January 22 - February 26, 2007
Invitation of Bidders	January 22 - February 27, 2007
Pre-Bid Conference	February 28, 2007 at 2 PM (Main Office)
Opening and Evaluation of Bid	March 14, 2007 at 2 PM (Main Office

Prospective bidders have to submit their updated company profile address to Mr. Fernando Lasafin, PBAC Chairman, ILECO II, Cauayan, Pototan, Iloilo. They should have experience in undertaking similar project within the last three years, Financial Standing of the contractor will be evaluated as to capability to accomplish the project.

Invitation and Issuance of bid documents will be sent to the qualified bidders after paying Non-Refudable Registration Fee of Three Thousand Pesos (PHP 3,000.00).

ILECO II reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject Bids at any time prior to award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder(s).

For more information, please contact the PBAC Secretariat at Telefax. No. (033) 529-8064 or call Mr. Fernando Lasafin at (033) 529-8063 or Cell No. 0920-918-0339 and Engr. Redmond Roquios Cell No. 0918-902-3703.

(Sgd.) **FERNANDO LASAFIN**
PBAC Chairman

Approved by:
(Sgd.) **RAMON P. APURA, SR.**
General Manager

(PDI – Jan. 17, 2007)

ZAMBOANGA CITY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(ZAMCELCO)
Putik, Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Putik, this city per requisite under Board Policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards, invites ALL interested Bidders/Suppliers to bid for the supply of CONCRETE POLES on consignment basis, to wit:

No	Quantity	Unit	Item Description	
01.	200	pcs	**ROUND CENTRIFUGAL PRESTRESSED CONCRETE POLES**	
			Approved Budget Cost On Consignment Basis	**P22,274.80 / pole**

Specification:

Height	14.00 Meters (45 Footer)
Design Load	500 Kgs.
Ultimate Load	1,000 Kgs.
Top Diameter (mm)	203 mm
Butt Diameter (mm)	390 mm
Weight (Kgs)	2,000 Kgs
Pole Thickness	80 mm

You may secure the Pre-qualification Requirements from the Office of the Finance Department, ZAMCELCO Complex in Putik, this city anytime during office hours and submit the same upon completion of all requirements thereof.

Submission of the Pre-qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 p.m. of **January 23, 2007** and no documents appertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

All applicants will be duly notified as to the results of the pre-qualification eligibility process. Only those who are pre-qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding upon payment of nonrefundable fee of **P3,500.00.**

Bidding will be conducted on **January 30, 2007.**

Sealed bid in-duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bids and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before 2:00 p.m. of **January 30, 2007.** Five percent (5%) Bidder's Bond is required as a matter of policy.

The right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO.

(Sgd.) **REINERIO R. RAMOS**
General Manager

(PDI–Jan. 17, 2007)

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Merritt Road Fort Bonifacio 1200 Taguig Metro Manila Philippines
PO Box 2102 MCPO Tel No. 893-6001 to 47 893-1320 Fax No. 840-15[illegible]

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PNOC Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

Security Services Contract for Mindanao-Geothermal Production Field (MGPF)
EDC 07-007

The approved budget is **PHP25,701,200.00** chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is two (2) years.

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid documents may be secured from either of the following:

1) PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila (c/o B.F. Salvador) or
2) PNOC-EDC MGPF, Ilomavis, Kidapawan, North Cotabato (c/o J.T. Tanael/M.G. Mabanag) or
3) PNOC-EDC Davao Logistics Office, Airport Road, Sasa, Davao City (c/o F.V. Lopez)

starting **January 17, 2007** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **One Thousand Pesos** (PhP 1,000.00).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **January 25, 2007, 2:30 p.m.** at the PNOC-EDC Davao Logistics Office, Airport Road, Sasa, Davao City. Site inspection will be conducted on the following day, **January 26, 2007.**

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group, 1st Floor, Building V, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila not later than **2:00 p.m. (Contracts Administration Group Office Wall Clock Time) of February 8, 2007** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

BAC Chairman

(PDI–Jan. 17, 2007)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City 1634
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5285

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Various Sizes of ACSR Cables Under FGJ 60701
Approved Budget: PHP 14,700,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Roderick R. Cabantog** starting **January 17, 2007,** from **9:30 AM** to **3:30 PM** and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP 400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **January 25, 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply, Property and Materials Management Division, at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Office Wall Clock Time) on February 8, 2007.** Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee I

(PDI–Jan. 17, 2007)

PMSNC medical mission

THE PHILIPPINE MEDICAL Society of Northern California (PMSNC) based in Milpitas, CA will conduct a medical, surgical and dental mission in Naga City, Camarines Sur on Jan. 22 – 26. PMSNC medical mission Head Emmanuel Cepe, M.D. said that the group hopes to serve approximately 10,000 patients with services ranging from medical, surgical, dental and dispensing of medicines and giving of relief goods to victims of Typhoon Reming.

Cepe is co-chaired by Carmencita Jose, M.D. and Carmelo Roco, M.D.

PMSNC started as a social organization to encourage fellowship amongst Filipino physicians but a growing urge to help others led to a more philanthropic turn for the society.

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American chamber opposes proposed ₱125 wage increase

Legislated hike to harm economy, group says

By Abigail L. Ho

THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE warns that House Bill No. 345, which mandates an across-the-board minimum wage increase of P125, will "severely harm the economy" if it becomes a law.

In a statement issued yesterday, the group said it does not favor the proposed bill, adding that it instead supported the existing wage-setting mechanism.

Under the current system, Regional Tripartite Wage and Productivity Boards meet each year to discuss how wage levels will change, if ever.

"They take into account the needs and concerns of business, government and labor as well as variations in local conditions in the country. Following this process, minimum wages were raised in 2006 to levels (above $6), now among the highest in (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations)," Amcham said.

The group added that the legislated wage hike would drastically reduce the country's productivity, and would likely result in the closure of companies, particularly the small and medium enterprises and the exporters, which operate on very low profit margins.

Citing a National Economic and Development Authority estimate, Amcham said the shutdown of such firms would cause the loss of around a million jobs.

It would, for example, "accelerate the demise of the shrinking garment manufacturing industry," as cheap imports from low-wage countries would flood the Philippine market.

"It appears that Congress overlooks the reality that the Philippine economy does not operate independently of other economies. It is hard to understand why they favor a law that will benefit the country's competitors and cause hardworking Filipino voters to lose their jobs," Amcham said.

The group said Congress would do well to focus on passing bills that would aid in boosting the country's economy.

These included bills on anti-red tape, anti-terrorism, Clark Special Economic Zone, the credit information bureau, regulation of lending companies, Personal Equity and Retirement Account, pre-need plan code, renewable energy and voice over Internet protocol.

Landco to invest ₱5B in Cebu project

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE PROPERTY DEVELOPment arm of Metro Pacific Corp. has unveiled a plan to invest as much a P5 billion in a high-end residential project in Cebu City amid a buoyant real estate market.

In a press briefing yesterday, officials of Landco Pacific Corp. said the development would be the "largest and most ambitious mixed-use residential development in the region."

The project covers over 200 hectares of prime hillside real estate near the city center, and the area is being developed as a joint venture project with Cebu-based Genvi Development Corp. of the Villalon family.

Landco executive vice president Francis V. Ceballos said the P5-billion investment estimate included the value of all the physical improvements and residential units to be built on the property.

For the first phase of the project, the company will spend as much as P1 billion on the development of approximately one-fourth of the property.

The funding will be raised mainly through pre-selling of the project.

The site is composed of eight contiguous hills with a ridge spanning over three kilometers.

At its higher points, residents will have a commanding view of the city, the sea and nearby islands of Mactan and Bohol.

The project will be launched within the first quarter and will offer premium residential lots, houses and lots, townhouses and condominiums to satisfy the needs of the local market.

Landco president and CEO Alfred Xerez-Burgos Jr. said he expected the prime sections of the project to sell for P15,000 a square meter—a price which he said was "reasonable" given the amenities offered by the firm.

"There will only be 90 lots for the top section, and we will carefully select the people we will sell this to," he said, adding that the firm would vet prospective residents to ensure the exclusivity of the project.

In comparison, Ceballos said that similar high-end property projects in Cebu sell for anywhere between P10,000 to P12,000 a square meter.

"We are very competitively priced [versus the competitors]," he said.

At present, Xerez-Burgos said Landco has close to 1,000 hectares of real estate sealed under joint venture agreements with their owners for present or future use.

Noting that practically all the company's project pipeline was composed of joint venture deals, he said that Landco's owners wanted to prevent a repeat of its problems of the late 1990s when a property crash pushed it to the brink of collapse because it assumed the risk for the project by buying the properties involved.

"Nowadays, [the property owners] have to share in the risk," he said.

DA expects 18% growth in agri exports in '07

By Christine A. Gaylican

AGRICULTURE EXPORTS ARE EXPECTED TO grow by 18 percent to $4.5 billion this year due to the expansion into new markets including China and the Middle East.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Salvador Salacup told the Inquirer yesterday that the double-digit growth was possible as both agriculture and fishery-based product exports were finding favor in international markets.

"There is a big potential to increase our export earnings this year and outdo the $3.8 billion export revenues made last year," Salacup said.

He said the department was banking on the growth of the country's top agricultural exports.

These include fresh bananas and banana chips, fresh and canned pineapples, coconut oil (crude and refined), fresh milk and cream products, desiccated coconut (used as food extender for baked products and pastries), fresh tuna, shrimp and prawns.

He also said exporters of fresh mangoes have better prospects this year as the Chinese government plans to soon resume imports of Philippine mangoes.

This is due to the Chinese government's approval of the hot water treatment of Philippine mangoes to remove pests.

Hot water treatment is considered an economical but effective way to treat pests.

Figaro embarks on aggressive expansion

By Daxim L. Lucas

FIGARO COFFEE CO. will embark on an aggressive expansion program this year, with the aim of opening more outlets around the country and abroad.

In an interview, Figaro president Pacita U. Juan said the firm was planning to open between 15 and 20 outlets this year. It currently has 55 outlets.

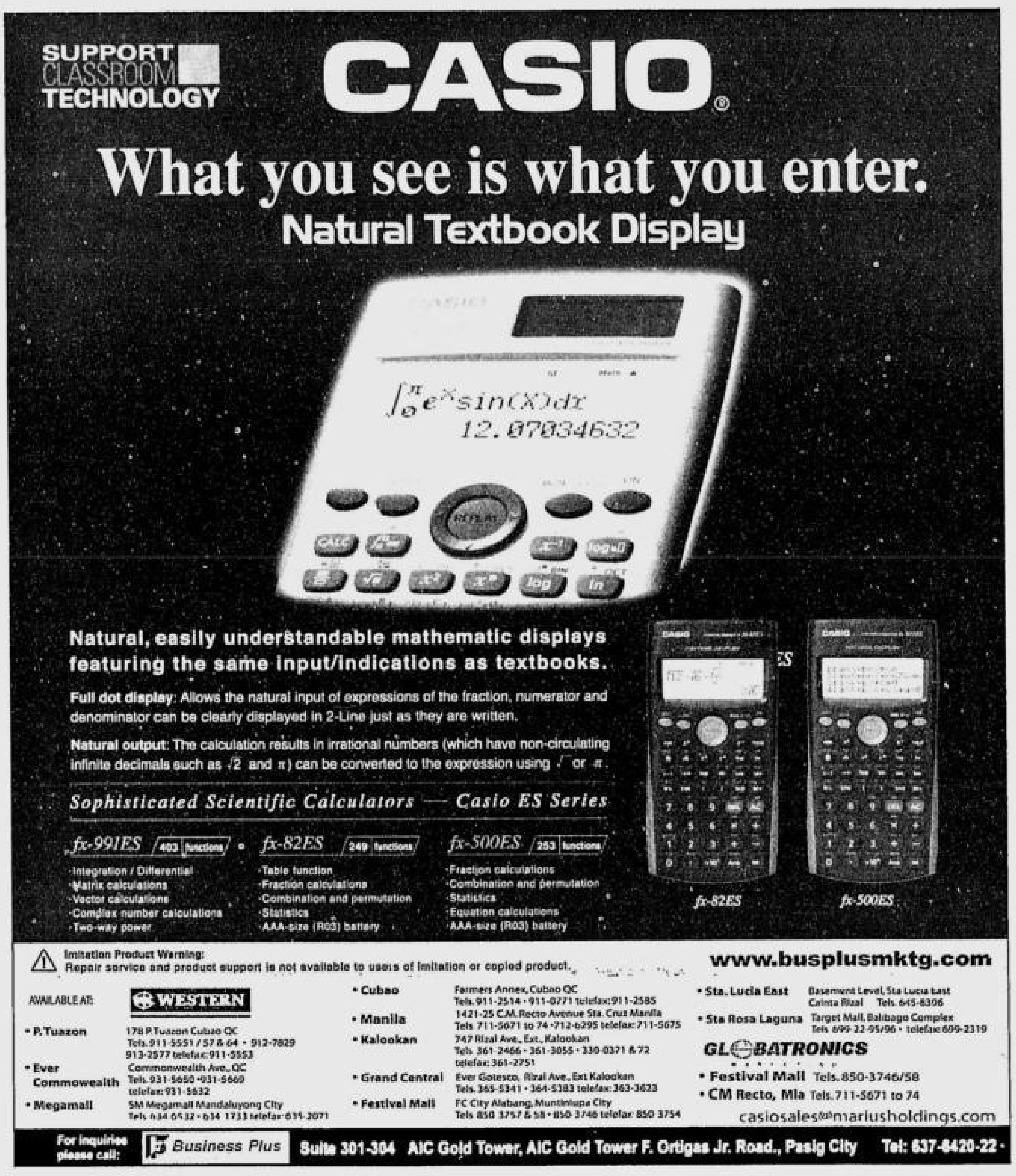
"Our main target this year is Cebu," she said, noting that the coffee chain already had an outlet as far south as Davao City. "We are also looking at Iloilo and Bacolod."

Most of its existing branches are in Metro Manila but for its expansion, the company is eyeing key cities in various regions.

Of the total outlets, 30 are run by franchise holders while 25 are company owned. It also has two branches in China.

Juan said Figaro continued to receive many offers from bankers as well as invitations from stock market advocates to raise money via an initial public offering.

She said the firm was studying these proposals and might go public "in the next three years."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fx-82ES 249 functions
- Table function
- Fraction calculations
- Combination and permutation
- Statistics
- AAA-size (R03) battery
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- Fraction calculations
- Combination and permutation
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Promoting the use of ethanol

FORD'S assembly plant in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, now capable of producing FFVs, will certainly help boost the country's alternative transport fuels program.

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

(Second of three parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

TODAY, A GROWING number of fuel stations all over the country are already offering gasoline products blended with ethanol.

In 2005, independent oil company Seaoil Philippines became the first to offer the ethanol-blended gasoline in all its stations nationwide with fellow small players Eastern Petroleum, Flying V and USA 88 following in a few months. The most recent would be Pilipinas Shell, when it launched its Super Unleaded E10 gasoline product last May.

Pilipinas Shell became the country's first major oil company to heed the call of the government to offer preblended ethanol at pump.

But even though an increasing number of Filipino motorists are now getting interested in supporting this type of fuel blend, there is still a huge percentage who are reluctant for fear that their vehicles might not be compatible.

FORD Philippines beefed up its assembly plant with state-of-the-art and high precision machines like the coordinate measuring machine for vehicle body.

Misconception

"There are misconceptions. A lot of people still don't know that all current as well as a great number of old vehicle models could use gasoline blended with up to 10 percent of ethanol (E10)," explained Bimbo Manzano, Ford Philippines product development engineer.

He reminded that some engine parts like fuel lines and electric fuel pumps will have to be modified so the vehicle can use gasoline with much higher blend of ethanol.

Manzano explained that even at 10-percent blend, a vehicle could already make a significant and immediate contribution to the environment.

Tests in the US

In fact, a United States Department of Energy handout explained that tests at the National Center for Vehicle Emissions Control and Safety at Colorado State University document a 25-percent to 30-percent reduction in carbon monoxide emissions when vehicles burn E10. The United States Environmental Protection Agency figures reveal similar results.

"Interestingly, the ethanol in E10, for example increases two to three octane points to ordinary unleaded gasoline, thus helping improve engine performance while keeping engine parts cleaner," Manzano said.

But while ethanol has lower energy content than gasoline, using an E10 will not affect mileage in a very big way. Testing in the United States has shown fuel mileage may decrease by approximately 2 percent so that a vehicle that averages 12.74 kilometers per liter, for example, would now average about 12.48 km/liter using an E10 fuel.

Ford's interest

Ford's interest in using ethanol as an alternative fuel goes back to the days of its founder, Henry Ford, who in 1908 originally planned to use ethanol as the primary fuel for his Model T.

But history would prove the world is not yet ready for ethanol as gasoline became the engine fuel of choice.

"But as the world today now searches for an alternative source of fuel, our founder's idea is once again becoming relevant," said Hazel Ludovice, Ford Philippines marketing and communications manager.

Although Ford's research in ethanol is just a part of the company's overall efforts in alternate power sources (Ford is also advancing in the areas of hybrid technology, clean diesels, hydrogen combustion engines and fuel cell technology), the company sees ethanol as a viable way to reduce the country's oil consumption right now.

(Next week: Ford's long-term bet on ethanol)

Ford launches newest generation of SUVs

FORD GROUP PHILIPPINES LAID DOWN a marker for sport utility vehicle excellence in the country with the recent unveiling of its complete lineup of SUV nameplates—Ford Everest, Escape, Explorer Eddie Bauer and Expedition Eddie Bauer—in a grand debut held at Sofitel Philippine Plaza in Manila.

The much-awaited launch of Ford's latest vehicles in the country marks another milestone for the company, as it brings to life Ford's newest tagline, "Make Every Day Exciting." This expresses Ford's renewed commitment to deliver new vehicles that are innovative, stylish and fun to drive that will give their owners a sense of pride, as well as provide excellent value in terms of overall cost ownership.

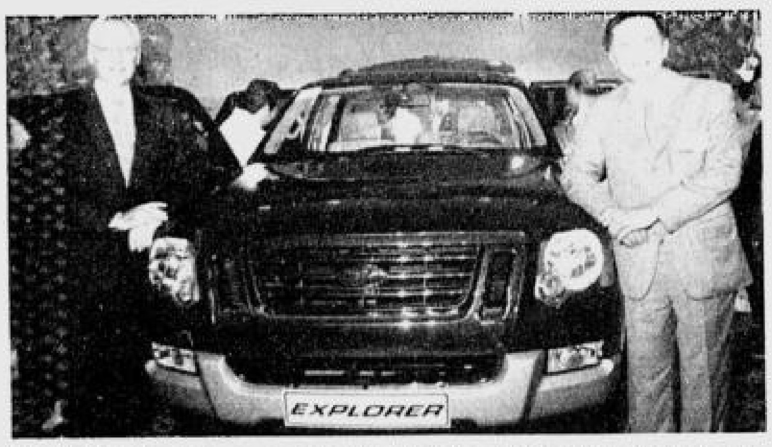
"The Ford brand has always been about creating powerful and capable vehicles that address all types of consumers," said Richard Baker, newly appointed president of Ford Group Philippines. "At Ford we always ask ourselves how we can make every day of our consumers' lives exciting—and we believe having the right vehicle is a good start. The introduction of Ford's complete lineup of SUVs today is just a taste of our brand promise to enable our Filipino consumers to live, work and enjoy every opportunity possible with the perfect partner vehicle."

Today, Ford offers the broadest and most far-reaching lineup of SUVs—Everest, Escape, Explorer and Expedition—exemplifying Ford's authentic SUV heritage of quality, performance, luxury and safety.

Premium SUV lineup

"Ford has defined the SUV category since the 1980s, and we are determined to remain at the forefront of this important and growing market. Our premium SUV lineup is now stronger, more capable and perfectly placed to deliver a great new ownership experience to our valued customers in the country," Baker said.

Ford's complete SUV range caters to various discriminating needs of any SUV enthusiast. It comes in all sizes—compact, mid-size and full—as well as provides more options in terms of engine type and drivetrain. Each vehicle is also specially designed to fit every SUV owner's personality—from single young professionals to adventurous families and even powerful entrepreneurs.



RICHARD Carl Baker, president, Ford Group Philippines and Henry Co, chair, Ford Group Philippines during the launch of Ford SUV at Philippine Plaza Hotel in Pasay City

- **Ford Everest:** The perfect family getaway vehicle
- **Ford Escape:** The ultimate partner of active urban warriors
- **Ford Explorer:** The muscular, yet luxurious SUV
- **Ford Expedition:** The commanding and spirited transport

Long-term durability

To demonstrate Ford's confidence in the long-term reliability and durability of its products, the Everest, Escape, Explorer and Expedition come with a three-year or 100,000 kilometers warranty, giving their occupants peace of mind and protection against unforeseen costly mechanical or electrical repairs.

In Metro Manila, Ford can be found in Alabang, Balintawak, Commonwealth, Edsa, Libis, Makati, Manila, Quezon Avenue and Shaw Boulevard. In the provinces, Ford dealerships are located in Bacolod, Cabanatuan, Cagayan de Oro, Cavite, Cebu, Dagupan, Davao, Iloilo, Pampanga and San Pablo. For more information, you may call 889-FORD (3673).

Latest 'idiot-proof' X5 doesn't sound Greek anymore

By Tessa R. Salazar

(First of three parts)

CARE FOR A BIMmer? Well, forget it if you weren't born Richie Rich, or your winning lotto number didn't make it to the 8 p.m. deadline. But if you care to read a Bimmer article (which is so much less expensive than buying the real article), then forget the prices of luxury vehicles, forget poverty, government corruption, world hunger, or cruelly slaughtered livestock.

Heck, even saint Angelina Jolie could indulge in occasional heavenly pleasures maneuvering her plane to G-forces that would make adopted son Maddox shriek. This she does while on a break from taking up the cudgels for third world governments.

And now that BMW has given Asian journalists the green light to critique the new X5, please allow a poor mortal to share how she indulged in sheer driving pleasure (times five, mind you). Junket's over, time to earn my keep.

Tested to the hilt

From the Arctic Circle to Namibia, the new X5 has been tested to the hilt. Its entire body shell, for instance, has been subjected to tough dynamometer runs and endurance trials on road and track. And then some: it considered inputs from customers and children before being released to the world.

The X5's first-line production of the ultra high-strength body shell alone involves more than 300 robots "supervised" by optical monitoring systems, with the welding process automated to nearly 100 percent in its $2.7-billion Spartanburg plant in the United States.

A longer, wider BMW X5 is arriving this second quarter of 2007. Inquirer Motoring drove the machine in Athens, Greece. Unlike the ruins all around the country, the vehicle made our day

THE CORROSION test was to make the entire body resist gravel, sand and stones as well as salt sludge and salt water under real-life driving condition.

The welding and bonding seams are then checked via ultrasound testers and inline lasers and measuring cameras for pinpoint accuracy. Robots are again employed when the power unit and transmission systems are fitted into the body, and the windscreen is fitted in position by two robot workstations, each able to handle two vehicles at a time.

From production to world introduction, everything about the BMW X5 has been grand. The global media "drive through" was held in Grand Resort Lagonissi, a place fit even for Greek gods and their guests.

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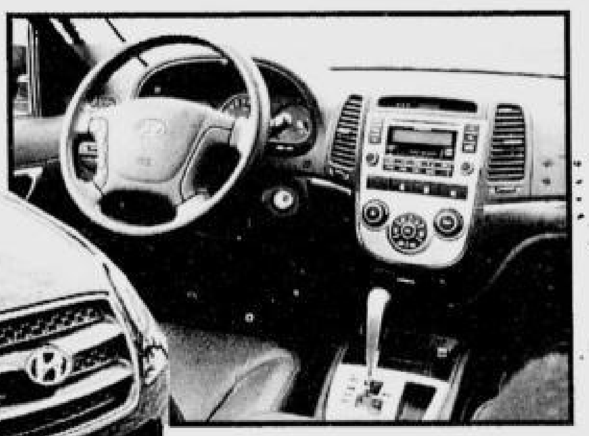
The Santa Fe's impressive arrival

ATHLETIC-LOOKING yet refined: the 2007 Hyundai Santa Fe



ELEGANT interior with leather, woodgrain and brushed metal accents.

PHOTOS BY AIDA SEVILLA-MENDOZA

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

FOR MOST OF US, THE HYUNdai Santa Fe is a totally unknown quantity since it arrived in Manila only last year. For that matter, this may be a stroke of good luck for Hyundai Asia Resources Inc. (Hari), the Philippine distributor of Hyundai vehicles, because the 2006-07 model, the first Santa Fe to arrive here, appears to be the most impressive midsize crossover that South Korea has produced so far.

The Santa Fe should boost Hyundai's efforts to improve its image in this country, where Korean cars are still not considered on par with Japanese marques. With the Santa Fe, Hyundai may finally convince the market that they can produce a better vehicle than Japanese rivals at a far lower price. Recent US Consumer Reports reviews recommending many Hyundai vehicles should win more buyers for this brand.

Upgraded

Originally, the Santa Fe was a compact sport utility vehicle. But for 2006-07, it was upgraded to midsize in order to make way for the new compact SUV Tucson, a 2005 addition to Hyundai's stable. The Santa Fe grew seven inches longer to 184 inches, wider to 74.5 inches, taller to 68 inches while its wheelbase was extended three inches to 106.

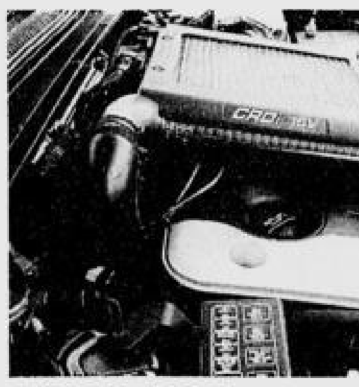
Esthetically speaking, the Santa Fe was also upgraded, reflecting the progress that Hyundai cars have made to look more like refined, solidly roadworthy machines than the tinny econoboxes of the 1980s and 1990s. With an athletic-looking front fascia, a sculpted hood, broad shoulders and lines that flow gracefully into each other, the Santa Fe is a pleasure to behold. From some angles, it looks like a baby Audi Q7.

Stunning

The unit I test-drove was stunning because of its unusual color. From a distance, it looked like a black vehicle but as you approached it you realized, to your pleasant surprise, that it was actually dark red. Like a chameleon, the superior red Santa Fe changes color under the sun.

The interior of the superior red Santa Fe matches its exterior in elegance and color theme. Perforated black leather seats with contrasting red piping, upscale woodgrain and brushed aluminum accents, classy curves and higher-grade plastics create a luxurious ambience a notch above other entry-level crossovers. The bigger dimensions translate into ample head, shoulder and leg room for five occupants including driver. In fact, in the United States, the Santa Fe is a seven-seater with a third row of seats at the rear. That's how roomy and space-efficient it is.

EXACTLY 79.4 cubic feet of cargo room in the Santa



THE 2.2-LITER CRDi engine

User-friendly

The gauges and controls are user-friendly, interior panels fit together snugly, the steering wheel has attractive circular and oval buttons for cruise and audio functions, the single-in-dash CD player/tuner with six speakers is MP3 compatible. The rear seat splits 60/40 and folds flat to increase cargo room which, with the rear seats up, already offers 79.4 cubic feet capacity. Rear seat passengers get their own aircon vents. Cabin kit, attention to detail and fit and finish are equivalent to those of a premium car.

Over here, the Santa Fe is imported CBU (completely built up) from Korea with two powertrain choices: a 4x4 gasoline-fed 2.7-liter V6 DOHC selling for P1.588 million and a 4x2 CRDi (common rail direct injection) 2.2-liter inline four turbo intercooler priced at P1.528 million. The CRDi version, which I test-drove, generates 150 max horsepower at 4,000 rpm and 34.2 Nm torque at 1,800-2,500 rpm. Both variants have automatic transmission with a 5-speed AT for the CRDi.

Solid ride

On the Skyway, the Santa Fe cruised comfortably at 160 kph with little wind noise, tracking in a straight line and providing an exceptionally solid, well-controlled ride. On-the-road stability and car-like ride quality are due to the MacPherson strut front suspension with increased caster angle and multilink rear suspension geometry plus electronic stability control.

Aside from the latter, the safety of occupants is assured by the solid construction of the Santa Fe's monocoque structure, two airbags, ABS with EBD and disc brakes on all four wheels, 3-point seatbelts, keyless entry and active headrests on the driver and front seats that, should a rear collision occur, move forward slightly to reduce the chances of whiplash injury. This is safety technology not normally seen in the entry-level crossover class, only in premium crossovers like the Volvo XC90.

Value for money

All this time, I have been referring to the Santa Fe as a crossover. It is more of a pavement cruiser than an off-road machine although it is built on a unique platform, not car-based. But this does not lessen the impressively solid driveability and value for money of the Santa Fe which is priced tens of thousands of pesos less than a comparably equipped Japanese or European crossover.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Suburbia: where they tear out the trees and then name streets after them.

Latest 'idiot-proof'. . .

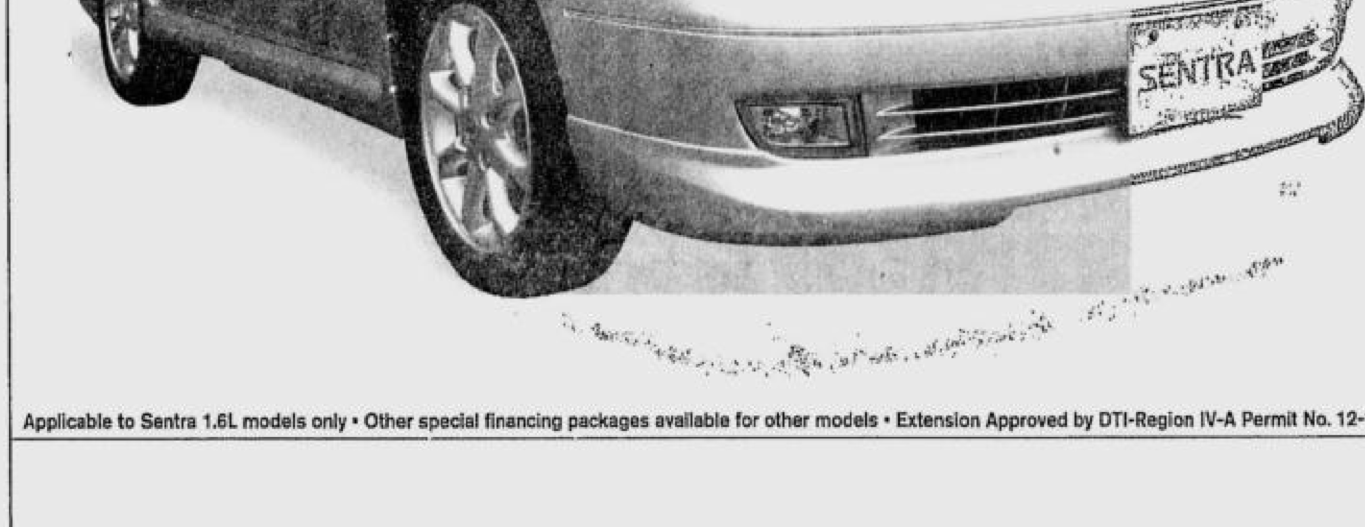
From page B6

The wind and weather weren't as welcoming, though, during the motoring media visit from Nov. 9 to 13. But the gloomy mornings weren't enough to spoil the drive. It only managed to ruin our morning photo ops.

Truly nauseating route

For the whole-day drive, however, BMW organizers chose a truly nauseating route along narrow pretzel-like country roads (not even the X5's confident grip on the turns could stop me from throwing up, which was checked only after I picked olive leaves and smelled them!). Other than that unpleasant experience, though, I must say driving in the outskirts of Greece was jaw-dropping; sharp curves challenged drivers to avoid oncoming speedsters from one side, and the deep ravines on the other.

Pedestrians alone were a challenge. Imagine cruising down a gravelly road in a seemingly sleepy town in the middle of the afternoon, only to be forced to screech to a halt by crossing pedestrians either made tipsy by the midday heat or the spirits within their favorite street corner pub. And if there's one thing I can say about Greek drivers: they want it fast! Speed limits are almost nonexistent in the highways. Their gas stations must be holding a promo there: fill up your tank, and get two adrenaline shots free.



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*"Don't grieve for me,
for I'm free.
I'm following the path
God laid for me.
Lift up your heart
and share with me.
God wanted me now.
He set me free"*

In Loving Memory On
The First Death Anniversary of
ABDON "DON" B. BUENSALIDA

(July 30, 1931 - January 17, 2006)

His wife, children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, request relatives and friends to remember him in your prayers.

Solemn Holy Masses will be offered today, January 17, 2007 at the following churches:

OUR LADY OF REMEDIES PARISH	M.H. DEL PILAR, MALATE, MANILA	7:00 AM
MINOR BASILICA OF THE BLACK NAZARENE	PLAZA MIRANDA, QUIAPO, MANILA	7:00 AM
HOLY FACE OF JESUS	R. HIDALGO ST. QUIAPO, MANILA	7:00 AM
SHRINE OF NUESTRA SEÑORA DE GUIA	M.H. DEL PILAR A. FLORES. ERMITA, MANILA	7:30 AM
NATIONAL SHRINE OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY	SANTO DOMINGO CHURCH, QUEZON CITY	6:30 AM
SAN SEBASTIAN PARISH	PLAZA DEL CARMEN, QUIAPO, MANILA	7:00 AM
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL PARISH	SAN MARCELINO ST., ERMITA, MANILA	6:00 AM
ST. JEROME ALABANG	ALABANG, MUNTINLUPA CITY	7:00 AM
MANILA CATHEDRAL	INTRAMUROS, MANILA	7:30 AM
PACO CHURCH	PAZ ST., PACO, MANILA	7:00 AM
OUR LADY OF SORROW PARISH	F.B. HARRISON, PASAY	6:00 AM
NATIONAL SHRINE OF THE SACRED HEART	SAN ANTONIO VILLAGE, MAKATI CITY	7:00 AM
SAN ROQUE PARISH	SAN ROQUE ST., MANDALUYONG CITY	6:00 AM
SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE	GUADALUPE NUEVO, MAKATI CITY	7:00 AM
HARRISON PLAZA CHAPEL	M. ADRIATICO ST., MALATE, MANILA	12:00 NN
MARY HELP OF CHRISTIAN	DON BOSCO PARISH, PARAÑAQUE	9:00 AM
ST. ANTHONY DE PADUA	SINGALONG, MANILA	7:00 AM
THE SHRINE OF OUR MOTHER PERPETUAL HELP	BACLARAN, PARAÑAQUE CITY	6:45 AM
SAINT HELENA CHURCH	BRONX, NEW YORK, U.S.A.	6:55 AM
IMMACULATE CONCEPCION PARISH	BATANGAS CITY	6:00PM
IMMACULATE CONCEPCION CHURCH	BAUAN, BATANGAS CTY	6:00 AM
CATHEDRAL DE SAN SEBASTIAN	BAUAN, BATANGAS	6:00 AM
OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH	FIL-AM VILLAGE, LAS PIÑAS CITY	6:00 AM
FIVE WOUNDS OF JESUS CHRIST	MOONWALK VILLAGE, LAS PIÑAS CITY	6:00 AM
MARY MOTHER OF THE CHURCH	BF RESORT VILLAGE, LAS PIÑAS CITY	6:30 AM
MARY MOTHER IMMACULATE	MOONWALK VILLAGE, LAS PIÑAS CITY	7:00 AM
STA. CRUZ PARISH	STA. CRUZ, MANILA	8:00 AM

Message of Thanks

*All I ever wanted
was to make people happy*

We, the family of

Ernest John (E.J.) Rufino Litton

who passed away January 7, 2007

praise and thank God for the 48 years of giving E.J. to us, his family and to all the numerous people whose lives he has touched.

We wish to express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all who spent precious moments with us, sent flowers, Mass cards, letters, texts of sympathy, gave donations to Kythe and in many other ways consoled us during our most difficult time of sorrow and loss.

God Bless

Tess – Gel, Tara, Belle, Ernest Jr.
Johnny and **Tere**
Brothers, sisters and brothers-in-law
Nephews and nieces

Third Death Anniversary
DR. HERMINIO A. ASTORGA

Former Vice Mayor, City of Manila
December 22, 1929 – January 19, 2004

On the occassion of his **Third Death Anniversary**, his wife, **Lynn Ira Vicente**, their children and their families request friends, family, and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.
Masses will be celebrated for his intention at the following churches on Friday, January 19th, 2007:

Malate Catholic Church	7:00 am and 6:00 pm
Ermita Catholic Church	7:30 am and 6:00 pm
St. Anthony of Padua Parish Church - Singalong	6:00 am and 6:00 pm
Our Lady of the Assumption Parish Church - Leveriza	6:00 am and 6:15 pm
St. John Bosco Parish Church - Makati	6:00 pm
Ascension of Our Lord Parish Church - Paranaque	6:30 pm
Villa San Miguel - Mandaluyong	6:45 am
EDSA Shrine - Mandaluyong	5:30 pm
Catedral Basilica Minore - Immaculate Conception - Malolos City	5:30 am
St. John Roman Catholic Church - Allentown, New Jersey	8:00 am
St. Peter the Apostle Church – New Brunswick, New Jersey	7:30 am
St. Mary's Church – Uxbridge, Massachusetts	7:00 am
St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church – Toronto, Canada	7:00 am
St. Ignatius Catholic Church – Winnipeg, Canada	7:15 am

"We miss you, **Dad**. You will always be in our hearts."

"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."
2 Corinthians 5:4-5

The Outstanding Filipino Artist
Leopoldo "Lee" R. Aguinaldo II

Died peacefully in the Grace of the Lord
at St. Luke's Hospital, Q.C.
yesterday early morning

He is survived by his beloved companion of 27 years, **Melba Arribas**;

His children **Elizabeth Aguinaldo-Alvarez**, **Leo Aguinaldo III**, **Daniel Aguinaldo II**;

His grandchildren **Leopoldo Aguinaldo IV**, **Nicole Aguinaldo**, **Lea Jamica Aguinaldo**, **Michelle Ladao** & **Claire Alvarez**;

and his brothers, sisters and other relatives.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment plans are being finalized.

His family request the pious readers and the artist community to pray for his eternal repose.

ASUNCION REYES VDA. DE GABAYA

joined her husband Crisologo,
and her sons Alfredo and Mariano
in their heavenly rest with Our Father God
on January 10, 2007, in Kingston, Ontario.

She is survived by her daughter, Patricia;
Her children-in-law
Fe Dimanlig, Romy Candido, and Ma. Luisa Aquino;
Her grandchildren
Rina and Greg, Gabby.
RJ and Caroline, Trina, Anna.
Martin and Ging, Lally and Edgar, and Mark;
and her sisters and brother
Alberta, Erlinda, and Tomas.

The pious reader is entreated to say a prayer for her soul.

In Loving Memory

on the Twenty Eight (28th) Death Anniversary of
EUFRASIA COSTA DE VITUG
who died January 17, 1979
and on the Forty Ninth (49th) Death Anniversary of
VICTOR BELTRAN VITUG
who died February 1, 1958

Their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren request relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of their souls.

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BENJAMIN Q. MACANDOG, SR.

January 2, 1914 -January 15, 2007
Forever In The Hearts Of His Loved Ones

His wife, Concepcion and children, Augusto and Ging-ging, Leoncio and Onette, Benjamin Jr. and Nilda, Maria Nora and Ping, grandchildren Cacay and Ron, Jun-jun, Mike, Mutya and Daniel, Lala and Bombo, Aris, Mario, Marissa and Macky, great grandchild Ron Jr. (RJ) and all the relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel 4, Loyola Memorial Park Chapels, Marikina City.

Interment will be on January 18, 2007 at the Garden of Memories, Loyola Memorial Park at 3:00 P.M. after the 1:00 P.M. Mass.

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NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION	
		DATE & TIME	PLACE
Charles Tan Ang	Chapel C Quezon City	January 17, 2007 11:30 a.m.	Paz Crematory
Demetrio E. Guerrero	Chapel 12-A	January 17, 2007 9:00 a.m.	Manila Memorial Park – P'que

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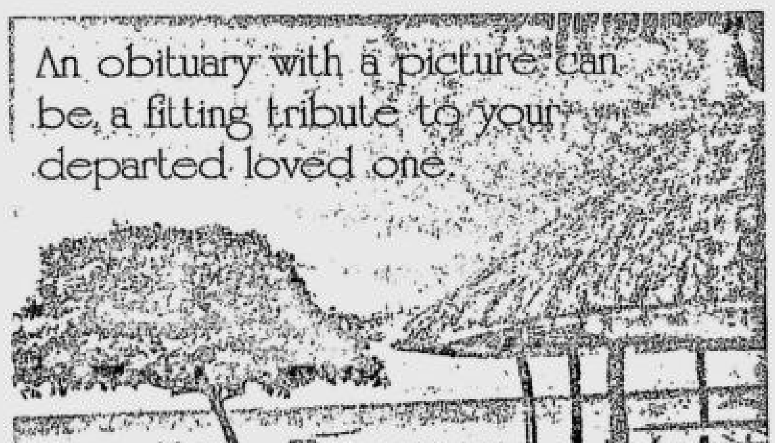

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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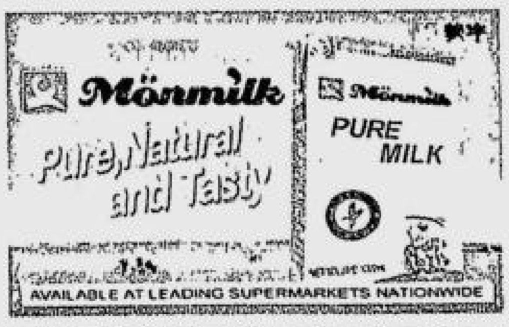
LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso** Chief of Correspondents **Pam Pastor**

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) **or email us at** lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph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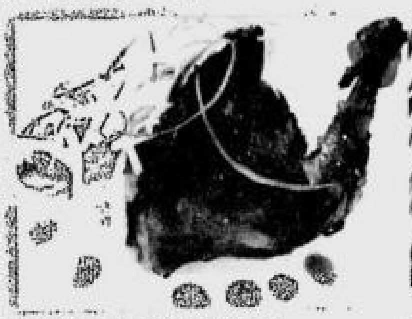
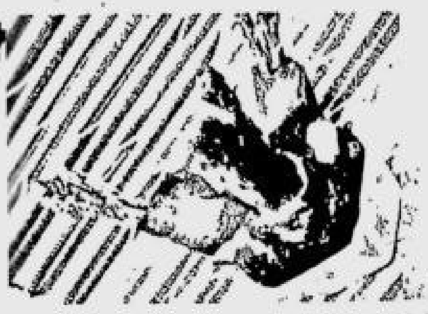
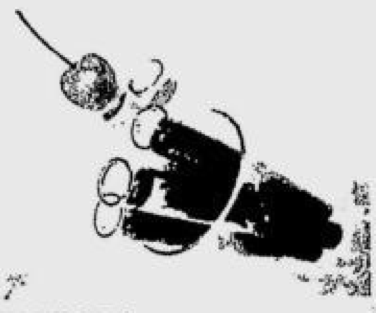


LEMONGRASS Chicken



ASPARAGUS Wrapped in Bacon



TEQUILA Tubes

BABY Back Ribs

2BU! RECOMMENDS!

Dinner in Bed

By Pam Pastor

Say hello to Bed Room, Bed Space and Bed Scene, three resto-slash-clubs that aim to serve good food and great fun

NICE, COMFORTABLE BEDS. Pajama-clad servers. Good food. Great music.

This is the vibe at the Bed Group of Restaurants and Clubs—Bed Scene in Mall of Asia, Bed Room in Eastwood City and Bed Space in Greenbelt 3.

Bed Room was heavily inspired by the opium dens of old Shanghai and the romantic interiors of Balinese resorts. Dark wooden beds and flowing gauzy fabrics allow guests to party in private with their friends.

Bed Scene transports guests to a blue underwater world. High arched ceilings, built-in aquariums and changing water light effects make for a soothing aquatic sanctuary.

Bed Space's white interiors and stylish space-age design will make you feel as if you're in another world.

The three restaurants may be designed differently but they have one thing in common: good food.

Developed by chefs who've had experience in restaurants in Napa Valley, California, Malaysia and Singapore, Bed's Pacific Rim cuisine is a delight.

Current bestsellers include the crispy California Spring Rolls, Bacon-wrapped Crabsticks and Asparagus, Grilled Beef and Chicken Skewers, Baby Back Ribs with tamarind glaze, Baked Stuffed Chicken, and the Bed Crème Brulée Trio.

The promise of monthly menu updates will keep people coming back for more.

Don't be surprised when the lights dim during dinner and laser lights take over. That's when Bed transforms from restaurant to club. Different DJs play different kinds of music: house, club, world, Latin, R&B.

Aside from Bed's award-winning wine selection, a wide menu of different cocktails and mocktails is offered, including bestsellers Red Berry Iced Tea, Liquid Ecstasy, Kamikaze, Between the Sheets, and Ask for More.

Bed Space is open 6 p.m.-1 a.m. Sunday to Wednesday, 6 p.m.-3 a.m. on Thursday, and 6 p.m.-4 a.m. on Friday and Saturday (tels. 0927-8096265, 7288036, 9002078 or 9156007).

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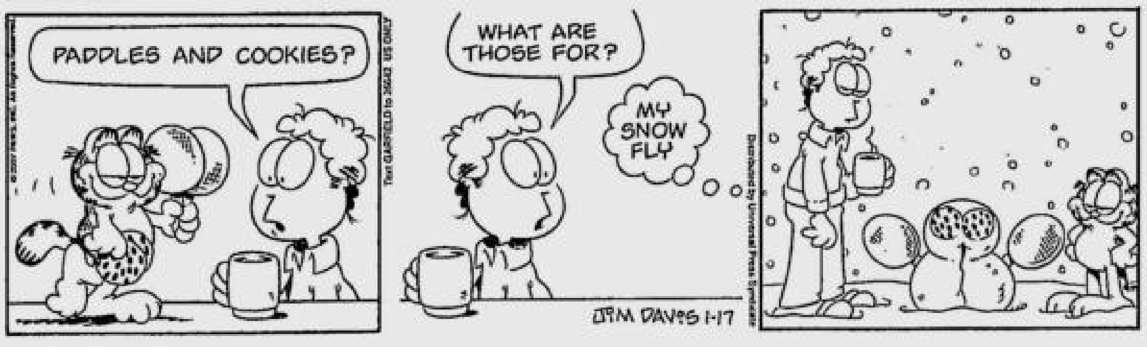
• SM Mall of Asia, Tel. No. 556-0479 • SM City Davao, Tel. No. (082) 297-2510 • Ayala Center Cebu, Tel. No. (032) 232-5455

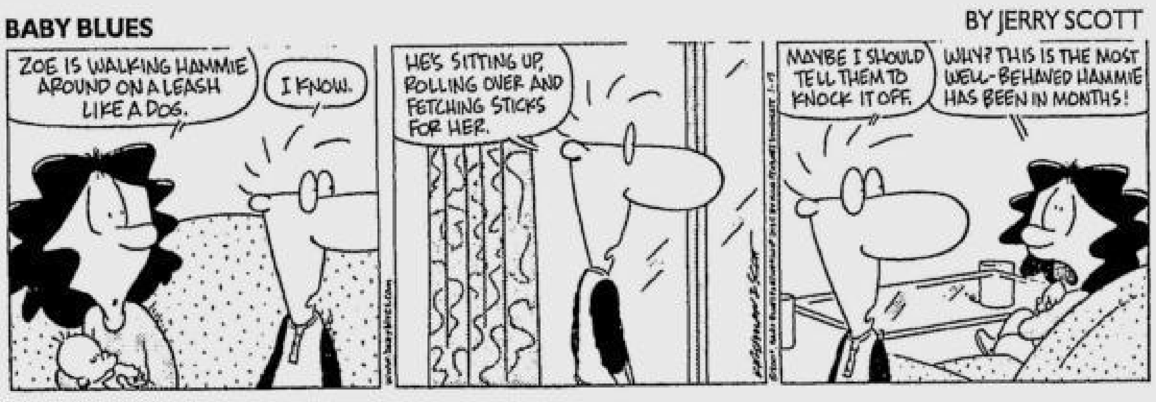
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


PADDLES AND COOKIES?
WHAT ARE THOSE FOR?
MY SNOW FLY
JIM DAVIS 1-17

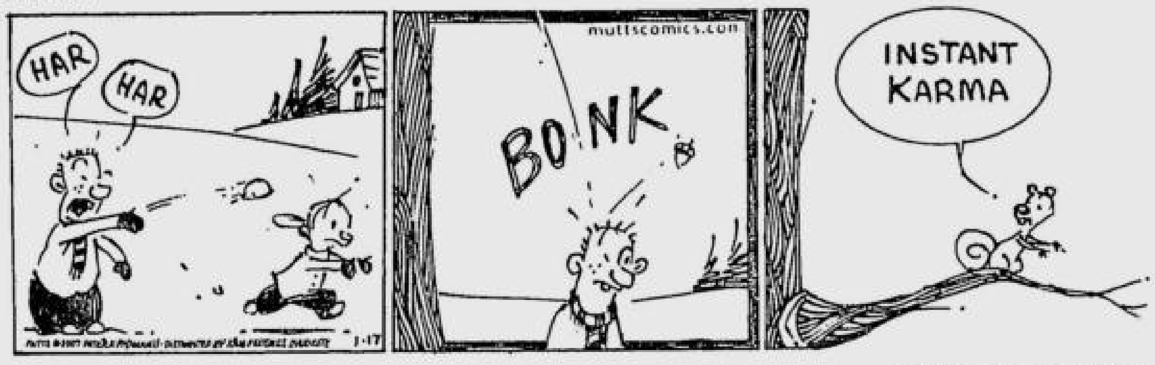
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


ZOE IS WALKING HAMMIE AROUND ON A LEASH LIKE A DOG.
I KNOW.
HE'S SITTING UP, ROLLING OVER AND FETCHING STICKS FOR HER.
MAYBE I SHOULD TELL THEM TO KNOCK IT OFF.
WHY? THIS IS THE MOST WELL-BEHAVED HAMMIE HAS BEEN IN MONTHS!

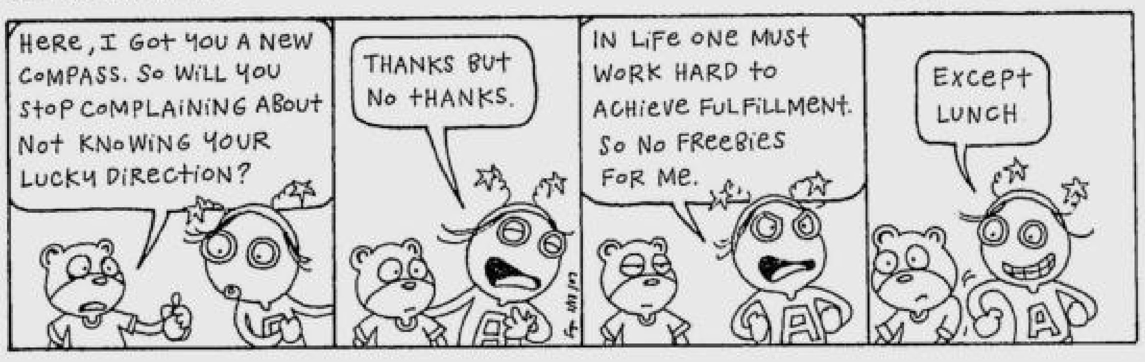
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HAR
HAR
muttscomics.com
BONK
INSTANT KARMA
1-17

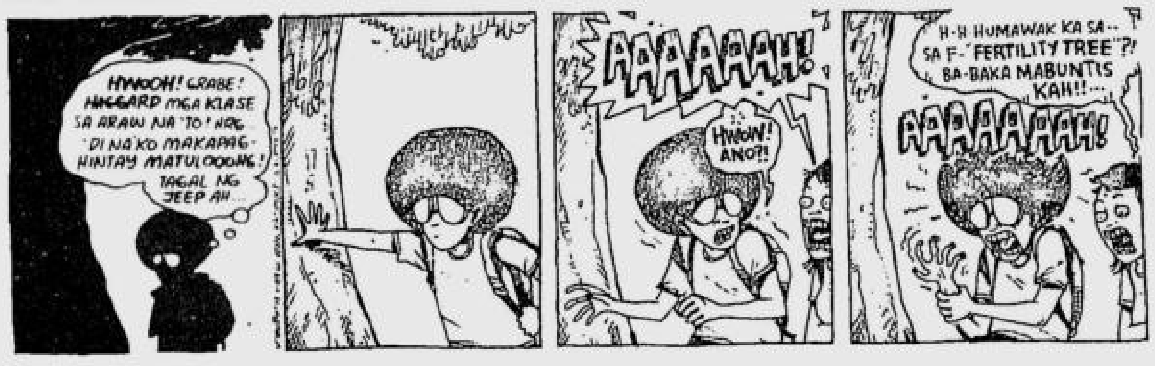
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Here, I Got You A New COMPASS. So WiLL You StoP COMPLAINiNG About Not KNoWiNG YOUR Lucky DiRection?
THANKS But No tHANKS.
IN Life one Must Work HARD to Achieve FULFiLLMent. So No FReeBies FoR Me.
Except LUNCH

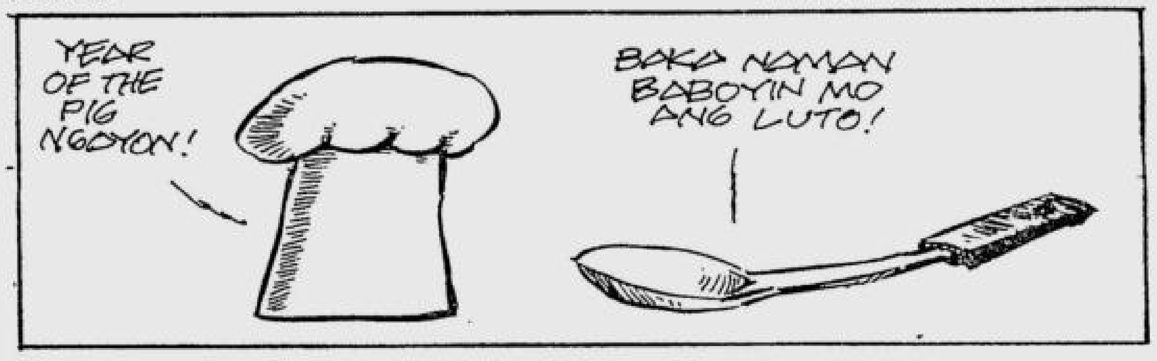
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HWOOH! GRABE! HAGGARD MGA KLASE SA ARAW NA 'TO! HAG 'DI NA'KO MAKAPAG-HINTAY MATULOOONG! TAGAL NG JEEP AH...
AAAAAAH!
HWOW! ANO?!
H-H-HUMAWAK KA SA-- SA F- "FERTILITY TREE"?! BA-BAKA MABUNTIS KAH!!...
AAAAAAAH!

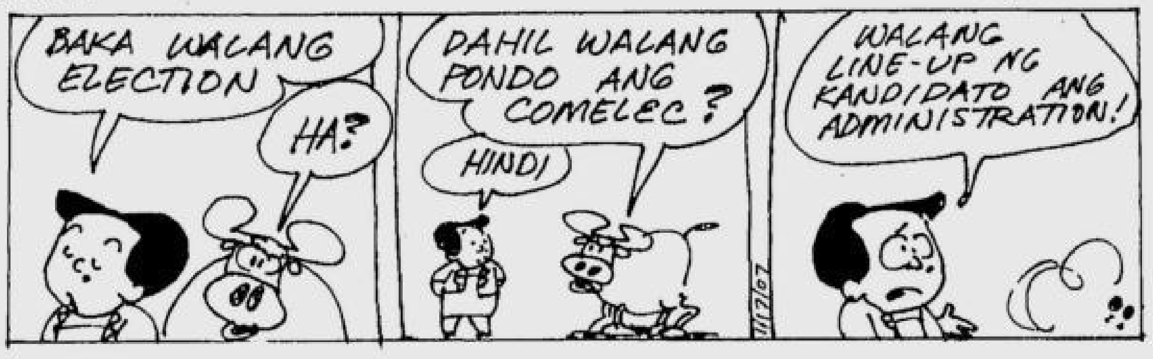
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


YEAR OF THE PIG NGAYON!
BAKA NAMAN BABOYIN MO ANG LUTO!

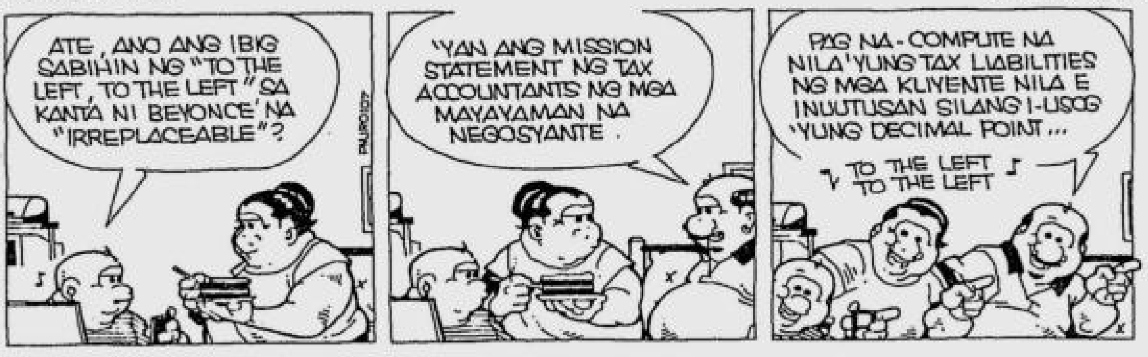
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


BAKA WALANG ELECTION
HA?
DAHIL WALANG PONDO ANG COMELEC?
HINDI
WALANG LINE-UP NG KANDIDATO ANG ADMINISTRATION!
1/17/07

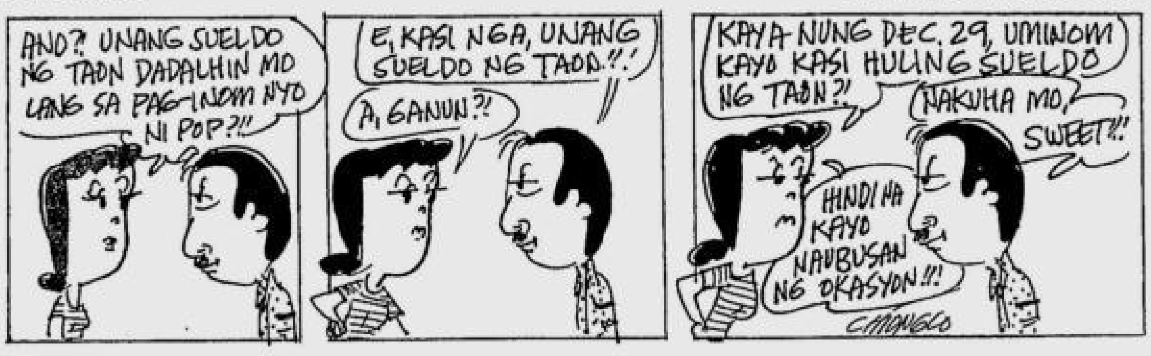
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ATE, ANO ANG IBIG SABIHIN NG "TO THE LEFT, TO THE LEFT" SA KANTA NI BEYONCE NA "IRREPLACEABLE"?
'YAN ANG MISSION STATEMENT NG TAX ACCOUNTANTS NG MGA MAYAYAMAN NA NEGOSYANTE.
PAG NA-COMPUTE NA NILA 'YUNG TAX LIABILITIES NG MGA KLIYENTE NILA E INUUTUSAN SILANG I-USOG 'YUNG DECIMAL POINT...
♪ TO THE LEFT ♪ TO THE LEFT

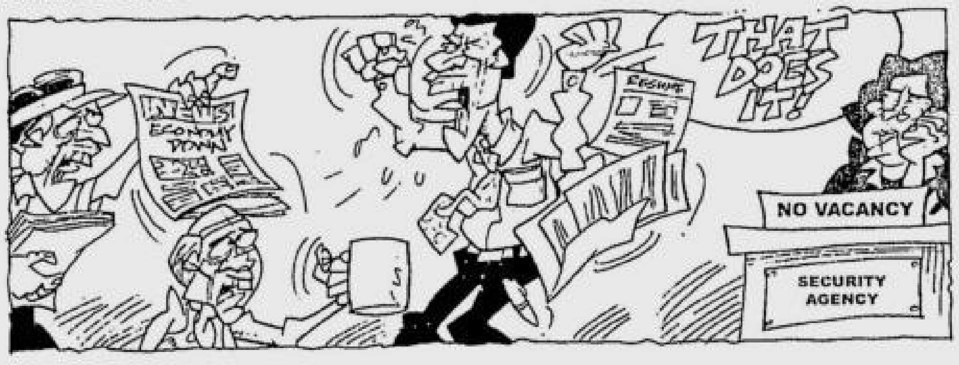
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ANO?! UNANG SUELDO NG TAON DADALHIN MO LANG SA PAG-INOM NYO NI POP?!!
E, KASI NGA, UNANG SUELDO NG TAON!!
A, GANUN?!
KAYA NUNG DEC. 29, UMINOM KAYO KASI HULING SUELDO NG TAON?!
NAKUHA MO, SWEET!!
HINDI NA KAYO NAUBUSAN NG OKASYON!!!
CHIONGLO

DIVINE COMEDY

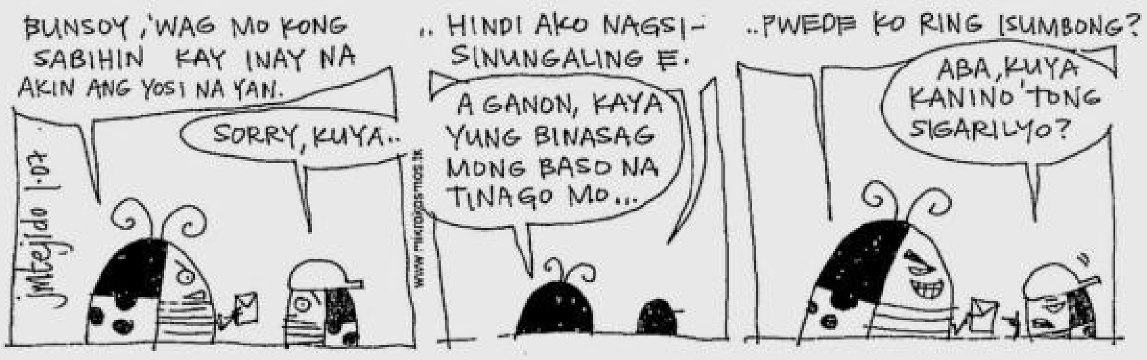
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


NEWS
ECONOMY DOWN
RESUME
THAT DOES IT!
NO VACANCY
SECURITY AGENCY

DAHIL SA SOBRANG KAHIRAPAN SA PILIPINAS, NAGDESISYON ANG FRESH GRADUATE NA SI BERTO NA MAGTAYO NA LANG NG ISANG RELIGIOUS CULT PARA MAGKA-PERA LANG

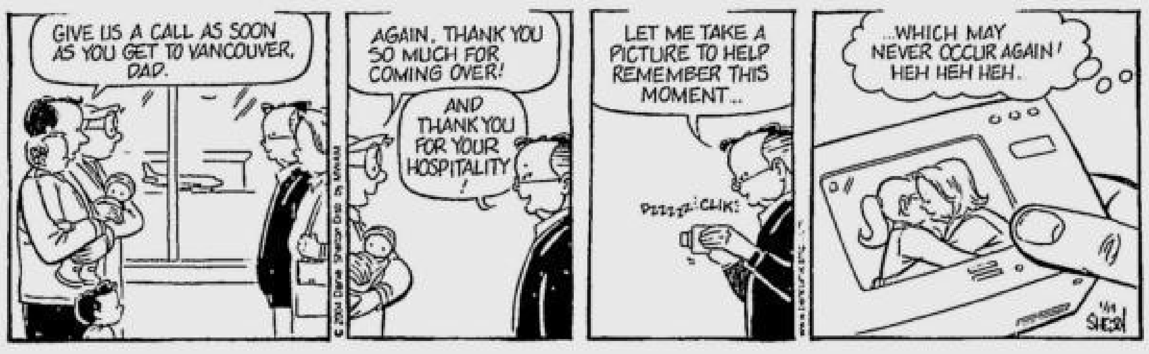
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BUNSOY, 'WAG MO KONG SABIHIN KAY INAY NA AKIN ANG YOSI NA YAN.
SORRY, KUYA..
jmtejido 1.07
www.mikrokosmos.tk
.. HINDI AKO NAGSISINUNGALING E.
A GANON, KAYA YUNG BINASAG MONG BASO NA TINAGO MO...
..PWEDE KO RING ISUMBONG?
ABA, KUYA KANINO 'TONG SIGARILYO?

BEN

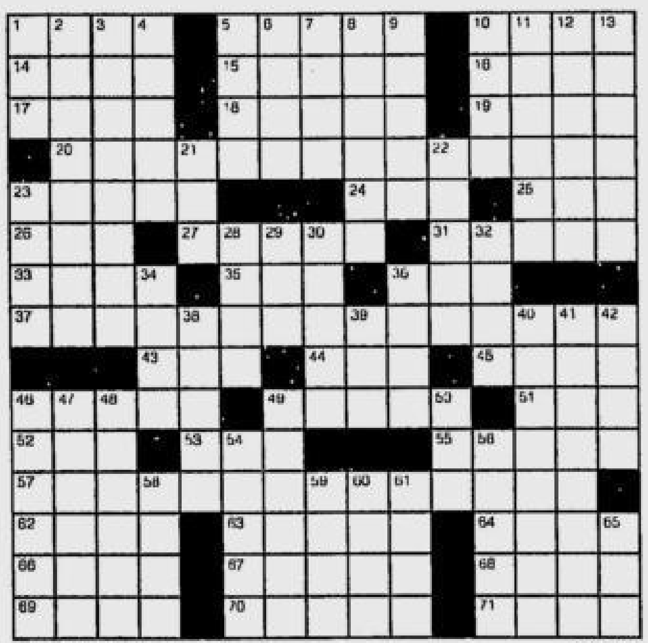
BY DANIEL SHELTON


GIVE US A CALL AS SOON AS YOU GET TO VANCOUVER, DAD.
AGAIN, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR COMING OVER!
AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY!
LET ME TAKE A PICTURE TO HELP REMEMBER THIS MOMENT...
PZZZZ! CLIK!
...WHICH MAY NEVER OCCUR AGAIN! HEH HEH HEH.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Kitchen attack?
5 Short summary
10 Old Norse character
14 Forearm bone
15 Oranjestad's island
16 Humdinger
17 No problem
18 Marner of fiction
19 Utah ski resort
20 Hint from Morse?
23 Author Carr
24 Musical sensitivity
25 Brewed beverage
26 Mine product
27 Hearth remains
31 Consumer advocate Ralph
33 Ref. for an element
35 Lubricate
36 Apiece
37 Hint from Fulton?
43 Actress Long
44 Lobster trap
45 Feudal serf
46 Smudge
49 Yellow-fever mosquito
51 Mix of oaters
52 Concealed
53 U.S. uncle
55 Richard's veep
57 Hint from Astaire?
62 Virtuous
63 Passover meal
64 Cab
66 Bombard
67 Speechify
68 Elevator man?
69 Aix summers
70 Former Israeli P.M.
71 Within range

DOWN
1 Regard with regret
2 Alternative to prix fixe
3 Audaciously rude
4 "Send Me a Lover" singer
5 Demolish in Leeds
6 Lindros of Hockey
7 Religious sect
8 Eases
9 Former Turkish honcho
10 Turnpike, e.g.
11 Remove, as cargo
12 Irritate
13 Pencil part
21 Roundball org.
22 Sea eagles
23 Frosty's eyes
28 Perch for several
29 Howdy-dos
30 Marry, sans ceremony
32 Comic Johnson
34 O'Neill's daughter
36 Rozelle of football
38 Top prize
39 With-it style
40 Body shop quote
41 __ nervosa
42 Office note
46 Ye Olde __
47 Courtly dance
48 Noted channel swimmer
49 Current unit
50 Mach+ jet
54 Man of fables
56 Climber's device
58 Gels
59 Hebrew month
60 Pierre's noggin
61 God of war
65 Leb. neighbor



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
1/17/07

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

T	I	D	E	S	■	A	P	B	S	■	G	A	R	B
A	D	U	L	T	■	P	E	L	T	■	O	D	O	R
R	O	S	I	E	■	A	R	E	A	■	T	O	G	A
A	L	T	■	V	A	C	U	U	M	T	U	B	E	S
■	■	D	E	I	C	E	■	■	P	A	P	E	R	S
C	L	E	V	E	R	■	P	A	S	T	■	■	■	■
L	A	V	A	■	E	V	I	L	■	A	R	S	O	N
A	M	I	D	■	S	A	L	S	A	■	E	C	R	U
P	A	L	E	S	■	T	O	O	L	■	T	R	E	K
■	■	■	■	H	O	S	T	■	P	E	R	U	S	E
S	H	A	P	E	R	■	■	T	H	R	O	B	■	■
W	A	S	H	A	N	D	W	E	A	R	■	P	I	G
A	N	N	A	■	A	R	I	A	■	A	S	I	D	E
T	O	E	S	■	T	E	R	M	■	N	I	N	E	R
H	I	R	E	■	E	W	E	S	■	D	R	E	A	M

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1/17/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have firm ideas about your goals, and you're very independent. Early hardships that test your mettle make you strong. You have such a memorable, forceful character, you sometimes overwhelm people. You work best on your own. Something you've been involved with for the past decade could end this year to create room for something new to enter.

Birthdate of: Jim Carrey, actor/comedian; Muhammad Ali, boxer; James Earl Jones, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): For some reason your personal life might be on public display today. (Let's hope you have nothing to hide.) Avoid public arguments.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Today you have a strong urge to break away from your daily routine. It's a mild urge, but it's there. The study of anything new will appeal to you now.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): No matter what happens, your emotional reaction to things will be more intense than usual today. Keep this in mind. You're not losing it. (And you don't feel casual about shared possessions today.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Conflicts with others might be heated today because the Moon is directly opposite your sign right now. Take a deep breath. Don't get your belly in a rash over anything.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a good day to take care of matters related to home crafts or personal hygiene and generally reorganize your personal things. Reduce some of the clutter in your life. Clean up a bit.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your relations with women will be improved today (regardless of your own sex). In fact, you feel more protective and nurturing toward others—both children and adults.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a good day to retire to a quiet, secluded place. You need to get away from it all. Childhood memories are just some of the things you're thinking about today

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You have a strong desire to let someone know exactly what you think about something today. Conversations, with siblings especially, will be lively! It's OK to have your own point of view. Where is it written that you can't?

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might be less willing to lend something to someone today. That's because you identify more strongly with what you own.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): The Moon is in your sign today. This always makes you a bit more emotional about everything. (No big deal.) Be cool.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You need to hide today or work quietly behind the scenes. Whatever you're doing, there's a good possibility that you'll come across a secret. (Psst.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): It's important to talk to a female friend today. Someone needs to confide in you or perhaps vice versa.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

				9				
5	4		6	2	1		7	8
	9		5		8	2		4
	1		3		5			6
	6		8		9			7
	8	9				3	1	
		8				7		
			4		3			
			9	7	6			

Difficulty Level ★★★
1/17

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	6	2	5	9	3	1	8	7
7	1	3	8	2	6	5	4	9
8	9	5	1	4	7	6	2	3
1	4	8	9	3	5	7	6	2
2	3	9	6	7	1	4	5	8
5	7	6	2	8	4	9	3	1
6	2	1	3	5	9	8	7	4
9	8	4	7	6	2	3	1	5
3	5	7	4	1	8	2	9	6

Difficulty Level ★★

AVANT-GARDE gown trimmed with ostrich fur by Rossana Diana

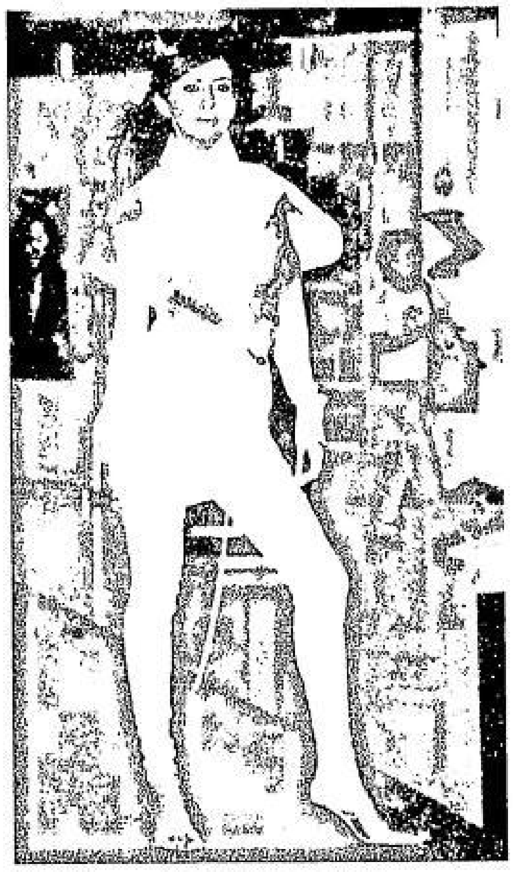
A FLIRTY ballerina-inspired number

CHIC and simple shirtdress for work and dates

KNEE-LENGTH dress with mesh sleeves and layered hemline by Neil Barret

High-street wedding finery

KRIZIA'S elegant white halter wedding dress



VEST dressed for funky occasions

By Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

THE NOUVA ACADEMIA DE Belle Arti Milano (Naba) recently staged a fashion show sponsored by the Italian Embassy, The Podium, the Societa Dante Alighieri Manila, and Singapore Airlines. The fashion show, dubbed "La Sposa Laica" (The Secular Bride), looked at the modern bride as its inspiration, and was shown last year in the streets of Milan.

The first part of the collection focused on bridal gowns made by 10 world-renowned fashion designers and brands including Elio Fiorucci, Rossana Diana, Neil Barret, Pupi Solari, Krizia, Costume National, Franke Morella, Thomas Choppin, Annagema Lescarie, and Koen Deweerdt.

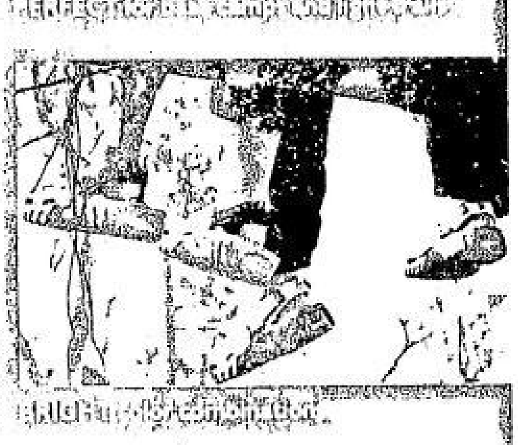
While there were traditional wedding gowns such as those from Elio Fiorucci of the famous Fiorucci brand (his collection featured '70s-inspired styles and cuts: carefree and colorful, they were among the show's standouts), others went for a more avant-garde approach, such as Costume National. There were touches of playfulness courtesy of Koen Deweerdt, who designs clothes for Barbie—yes, as in the doll by Mattel. However, his structured pieces indicated none of the overdone froth that characterizes the doll's costumes.

Well-known bridal designer Annagemma Lescarie, who opened a prestigious bridal store in the center of Milan in 1996, has collaborated with Ferre and Dior. Her pieces were romantic and bordered on the traditional, but still managed to surprise the audience with interesting trimming and detail. Another designer, Thomas E. Choppin, has worked with Thierry Mugler and John Galliano. Rossana Diana provided accessories.

The second part of the show featured designs from junior and senior students of the Fashion and Textile Design school of Naba. They interpreted the theme, "Emigration, Integration," with touches of ethnic cultures blending with Western-style clothing in an attempt to showcase the fusion of world cultures.

GET A GRIP. Crocs are ideal for light climbing.

[illegible]



[illegible]

Playing rough

CHILLING out after a climb

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Luigi Onglao

USUALLY, SHOES ASSOCIATed with tough outdoor activities such as hiking and rafting are no-frills, fully functional, and just plain boring. After all, there's no point in getting flashy, colorful shoes when they're only going to get covered in mud and grass.

However, for the people behind Crocs, the line of footwear that immediately became popular for their comfort and durability, outdoor shoes need not necessarily be ugly.

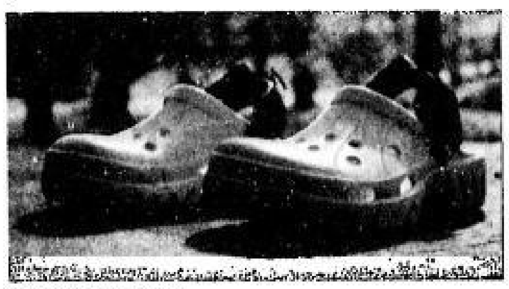
With the launch of the new Off Road style of Crocs, outdoor lovers can now hike around as they please in the comfortable clogs, which make the usual outdoor footwear (made with rubber tires and cloth straps) look hideous in comparison.

Crocs, while made of a lightweight material called Croslite, are durable and slip-resistant. They're great for walking on slippery rocks and trails. While the Off Road Crocs are not recommended for heavy hiking, they are ideal for walking around campsites and water activities such as rafting or kayaking.

Get a pair if you're planning to do a lot of outdoor activities this summer. As they require very little cleaning (all you need to do is run them under water with soap and a toothbrush), you won't have to worry about maintaining your shoes while on the trail.

Choose from several combinations of colors: army green and orange, black and red, chocolate brown and lime green, and orange and pearl. Crocs are available at leading malls nationwide.

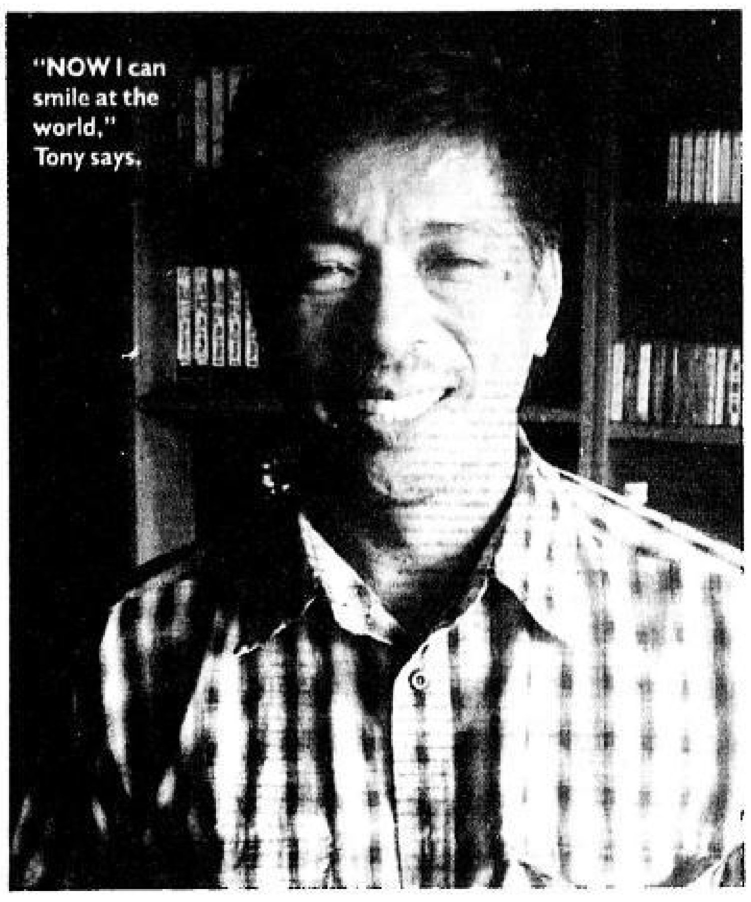
E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com



OFF Road Crocs

HANGING out at the campsite

MODELS: PHILIPPINE AIRLINES MOUNTAINEERING CLUB
ASSISTED BY FRANCIS CRUZ



"NOW I can smile at the world," Tony says.

2BU! TO THE RESCUE

Teeth for Tony

By Pam Pastor

WHEN WE LAUNCHED 2bU! to the Rescue last Christmas with 21 wish grants, one of the most memorable experiences for us was the story of Tony Aguila, the preacher who, according to his son Aaron, "has no teeth while teaching."

Aaron wanted dentures for his father who has lived without them for years.

We didn't think twice about it. We immediately contacted Dr. Chrissie Capicoy and 25-year-old Dr. Lourdes Hortillas, two kind and young dentists who eagerly jumped at the chance to help.

When Chrissie found out that the last time Tony had dentures was in the early '70s, she was surprised: "That was before I was born!"

Tony told us that he had been praying for dentures for decades now, and the chance finally came when his son Aaron wrote to us.

When that article was published, Tony had visited Dr. Chrissie and Dr. Lourdes twice—but his dentures were still being made. We made a prediction—that Tony would enjoy his Noche Buena more—because we were sure he would get his dentures before Christmas.

He did.

And when he went to the clinic to try on his new teeth, Tony had a surprise for his favorite dentists. He brought them boxes of *buko* pie from his hometown in Laguna—his way of saying thanks.

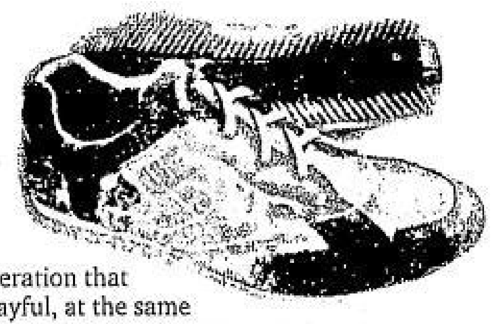
Although he is still adjusting to having dentures ("It would be like breaking in new shoes," Dr. Chrissie said), Tony is very happy with his new teeth. He sent us a beautiful text message on New Year's Eve. He said: "Now I can smile at the world."

The world is smiling back at you, Tony.

Do you need to be rescued? E-mail 2butotherescue@gmail.com

> For years, Tony Aguila has lived without teeth. Thanks to his son Aaron and two kind dentists, he now has a smile he can be proud of

36 years of kickin' style



THE STORY OF KICKERS WAS INSPIRED BY A FASHION trend that is now a staple in every closet: jeans. Daniel Raufast, owner of a French company which specialized in children's shoes, was strolling to his office in Paris one day when he saw a gigantic poster for the American Musical "Hair." It featured a smiling group of teenagers wearing colorful American shirts and jeans, but were all barefoot!

No wonder. The sober leather school shoes available for teens then were not a match for the comfortable, let-it-all hang out look of denim.

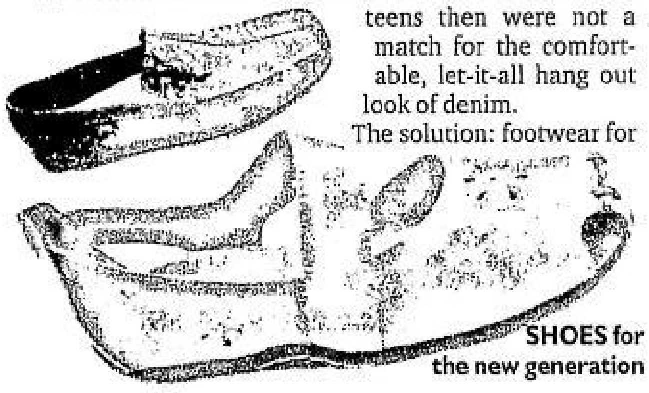
The solution: footwear for this new generation that is fun and playful, at the same time strong, flexible and comfy. Thus, Kickers.

For the flower-power generation, the shoes were a medley of bright colors, decorative stitching and leather patches around the ankle and down the eyelet pad. The final touch was the distinctive Kickers floret.

From producing 300 pairs in July 1970, Kickers reached daily production of about 12,000 pairs within the next three months!

Today, Kickers can be found in all corners of the globe, with stores in more than 70 countries. Though it has been more than three decades, the brand remains true to its spirit of offering fun, colorful shoes which are both simple and comfortable—a pleasure for both the eye and the feet.

Kickers continuously reinvents itself with new collections for the young and young at heart. Expanding from the original "Jeans Boot," it has offered slippers and sandals of different styles and lines. Kickers is a perfect fit for today's fast-changing lifestyles—a mark that will surely keep this brand alive and kicking for years to come!



SHOES for the new generation

Head-to-foot pampering

TELEVISION HOST AND actress Toni Gonzaga is the newest endorser of BlueWater Day Spa.

The spa, which recently opened its newest and biggest branch on Mother Ignacia Avenue, QC (near ABS-CBN), offers head-to-foot treatment using the latest in spa technology.

It offers clients a combination of aromatherapy, massage techniques and the latest in spa technology.

Gonzaga is seen almost every day in such shows as "Pinoy Dream Academy," "Crazy For You" and "ASAP." She says she spends three to four hours in a spa, favoring traditional Filipino massage and foot reflexology.

BlueWater Day Spa pioneered the traditional Filipino healing massage, *hilot* using an Aromatic Herbal Pack. Another unique offering is the Crystal Massage Therapy that tries to harness the healing powers of crystals.

Another celebrity endorser, model Brad Turvey, favors the Crystal Massage Therapy.

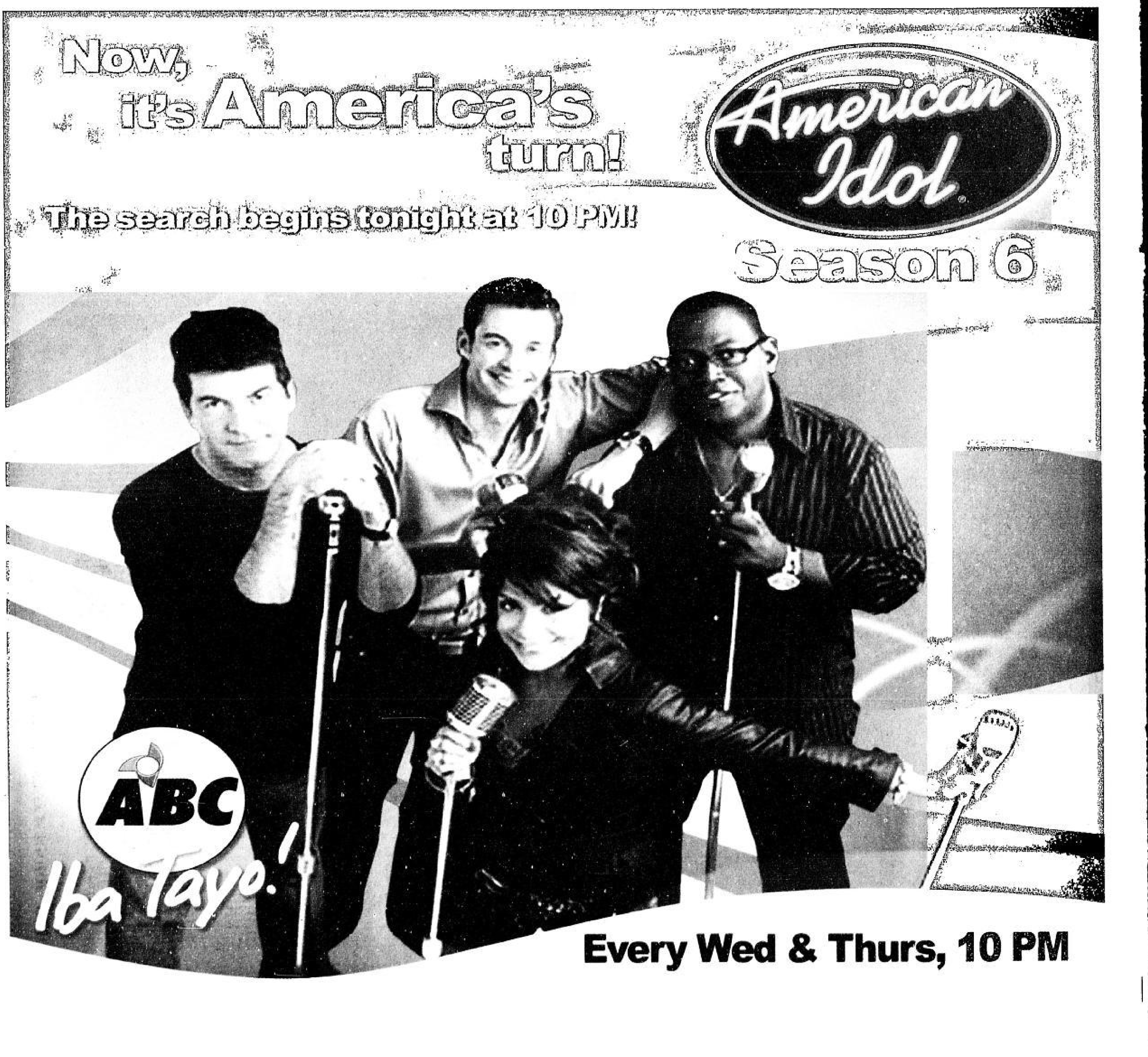
BlueWater Day Spa also has the Cellulite Melter Massage that lessens the problem of fluid retention. Its newest product offering is the digital nail art that puts chic designs on nails instantly.

It also offers body treatments that target specific problem areas using the latest technologies like Micro Impact and FPL (Fluorescent Pulsed Light System).

BlueWater, which has licensed aestheticians and well-trained masseuses, also provides such services as hair removal, body toning, tattoo treatments, anti-aging treatments.

BlueWater Day Spa has branches in Makati, Alabang, and Greenhills.

SPAHOLIC: Toni Gonzaga



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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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Not preggy … but happy together

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

NOT THAT THEY WANT TO BE KNOWN AS local tinseltown's "Romeo and Juliet," but it was Rufa Mae Quinto who pointed out that she and boyfriend Erik Santos are on opposite sides of the network wars.

She's a *Kapuso* (GMA 7 talent); he's a *Kapamilya* (ABS-CBN 2 star). Their Sunday noontime variety shows are direct competitors—she's on "S.O.P."; he's on "A.S.A.P. '07."

They don't let the competition affect their personal relationship, however.

"She even visits me at work," Erik said.

"I dropped by 'A.S.A.P.' only once. I'm shy *e*. I don't want to be perceived as a stage girlfriend," she explained. "We don't let work get in the way [of our personal life]. Give-and-take *kami*. If his show wins in the ratings, I am happy for him. When my show does well, he's happy for me too."

Even their endorsements are rivals, Rufa Mae said.

"I'm with BPI Express Padala; she's with Smart Padala," he said. "It's just work."

The couple also had to parry all sorts of controversies so early in their relationship. (The two, who are managed by Backroom, hooked up in June last year.)

"What is important is that, in spite of the intrigues, we've remained positive," she said. "I also believe that it won't help our relationship if we

NOT PREGGY/ D3

NO NETWORK WARS. Rufa Mae Quinto and Erik Santos

OPENING TODAY

Agent X44

Stars Vhong Navarro, Pokwang, Mura, Mariel Rodriguez, John Lapus, Tony Ferrer, Cassandra Ponti, Jeffrey Quizon

Directed by Bb. Joyce E. Bernal

King (Navarro), who dreams of following in the footsteps of godfather-super spy Tony Falcon, is rejected by the National Venue for Investigation. But when Lapu-Lapu's *bolo* gets stolen from the Mactan Museum, the wannabe is recruited by the NVI to recover the artifact. Navarro calls it his tribute to Tony Ferrer, who originated the role of Falcon or Agent X44, the Pinoy James Bond, in the 1970s. He jokes that his pint-sized co-star Mura is the "Weng-Weng of the new generation." Director Bernal, who watched a few Falcon movies as a kid, says the agent's look—"pompadour and groovy white suit"—is unforgettable. Navarro is the perfect guy to revive the Agent X44 franchise because he shares "Ferrer's unexpected charisma," insists Bernal.

Arthur and the Invisibles

Stars Freddie Highmore, Madonna, Robert De Niro, David Bowie, Jimmy Fallon, Mia Farrow

Directed by Luc Besson

Luc Besson, the acclaimed French filmmaker behind "The Fifth Element," whips up an "extravagant quest involving tiny elves (called Minimoys), hidden treasure and mosquito-piloting marauders." Colin Covert of the Minneapolis Star Tribune raves: "Although the premise might sound cloyingly cute, [it's] frenetic, fresh and funny … [The director] pulls out all the stops to give Pixar a run for their money." Neil Genzlinger of New York Times calls it a "wowzer … The computer-generated world is visually rich, but short on the droll humor that makes good children's films bearable for adults." Peter Debruge of Miami Herald opines that "this inventive family movie sets up the most delightful premise, then squanders it."

Innocent Voices

Stars Carlos Padilla, Leonor Varela, Xuna Primus, Gustavo Muñoz, Ofelia Medina

Directed by Luis Mandoki

Best Film winner in the 2005 Berlin, Seattle and San Diego film festivals, this political drama was also Mexico's official entry to the 2005 Oscar race. An 11-year-old boy (Padilla) and his protective mom (Varela) must confront the inevitable: On his 12th birthday, he will be drafted into the army to fight in the El Salvadoran civil war in the 1980s. Kirk Honeycutt of The Hollywood Reporter describes it as "a riveting tale of survival and how even war

OPENING/ D2

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OPENING TODAY

"DÉJÀ VU"

From page D1

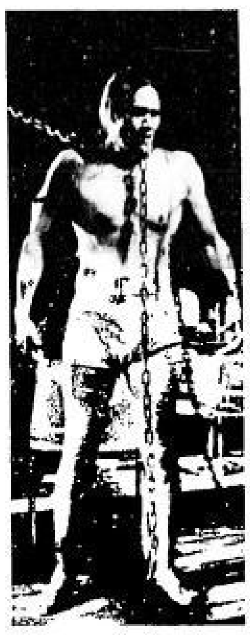
cannot diminish a child's indomitable spirit." Elizabeth Weitzman of New York Daily News thinks it's a film of "deep sadness and anger." Steven Rea of Philadelphia Inquirer comments that "it could have been immensely more powerful if it had been made with less artifice." Exclusively at Ayala Cinemas.

Déjà Vu

Stars Denzel Washington, Jim Caviezel, Val Kilmer, Paula Patton

Directed by Tony Scott

An antiterrorism agent (Washington) relies on flashes of memory, or "déjà vu," to solve a horrendous crime that killed 540 people in a New Orleans ferry boat. Michael Rechtshaffen of The Hollywood Reporter hails it as a "smart, explosive techno-thriller that remains compelling right up to its brain-twisting ending." David Ansen of Newsweek states that this "flashy Jerry Bruckheimer thriller … is preposterous but never dull. Scott whips the action into a taut, tasty lather." Scott Bowles of USA Today rants that "[this flick] cannot escape the weight of its murky science, action-film formula and … pat ending [which] seems … the product of a studio exec who walked out of a test screening that went poorly."



Saw III

Stars Angus Macfadyen, Bahar Soomekh, Dina Meyer, Shawnee Smith, Tobin Bell

Directed by Darren Lynn Bousman

Jigsaw joins Freddie Krueger and Jason in the horror franchise Pantheon. In the third installment of a grisly thriller, cancer-stricken Jigsaw (Bell) tortures a depressed dad (Macfadyen) and brain surgeon (Soomekh), with the help of his ex-junkie apprentice (Smith). Michael Ordoña of Los Angeles Times points out that "more gore is really all [it] has to offer … [It] sorely tests the audience's goodwill." Wesley Morris of Boston Globe complains that it's "predictable … a long, scrambled, indifferently made affair." Rob Nelson of Village Voice dismisses one scene as "laughably absurd." Steve Tilley of Toronto Sun says it's "gross and squirmy, but it's got a lot of brains and heart to go along with its guts."

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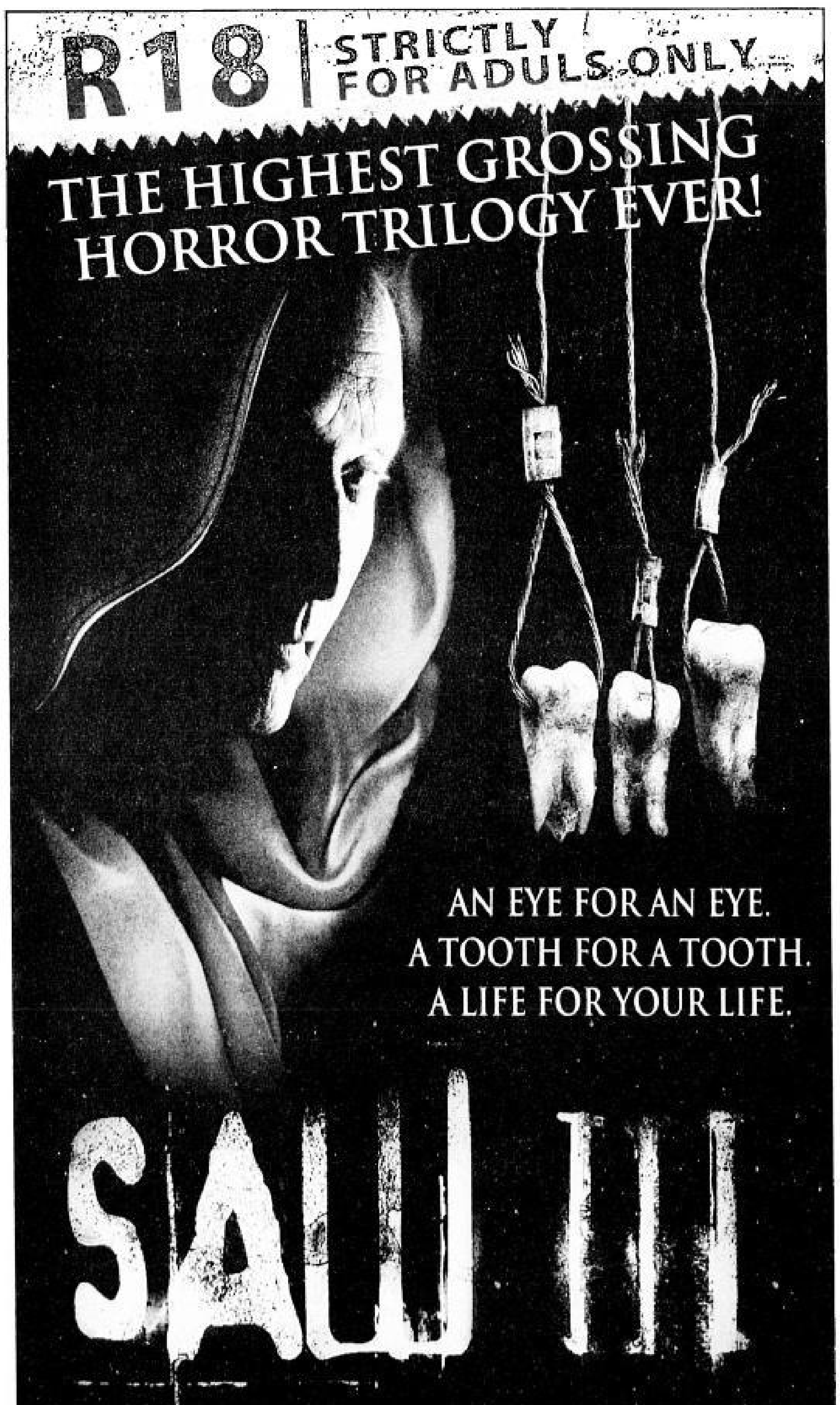
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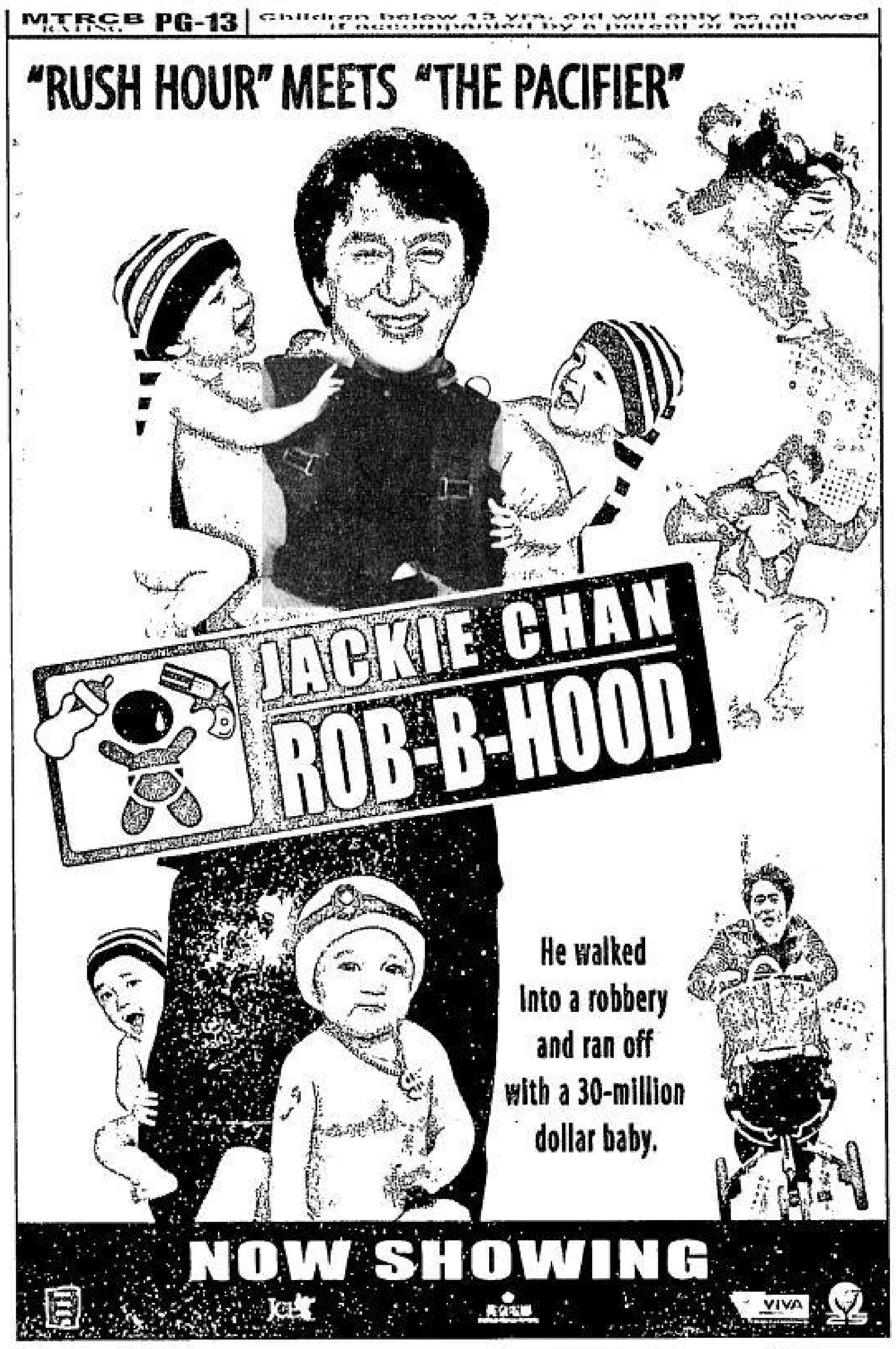
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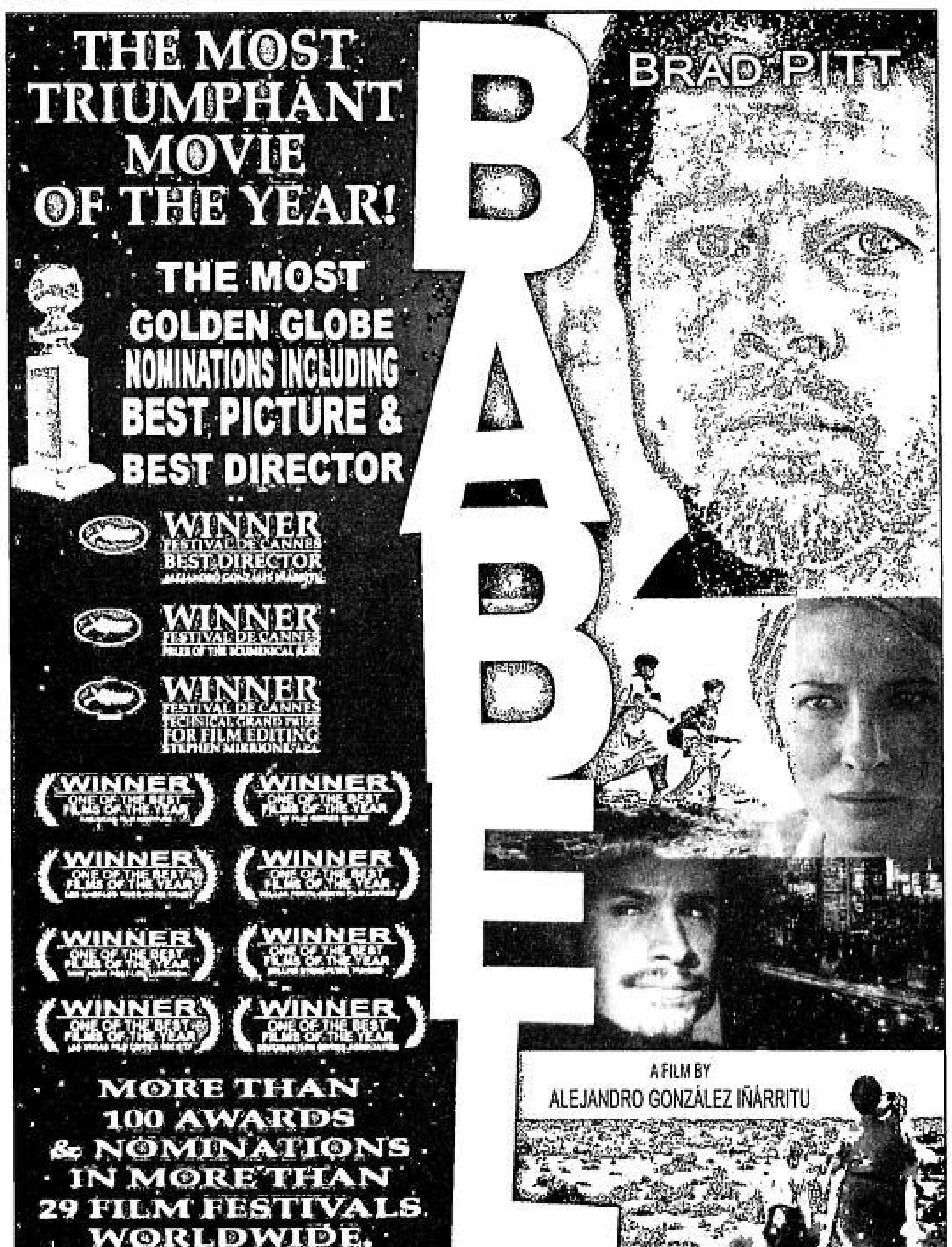
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VIVA

Not preggy… but happy together

From page D1

fight with other people."

Case in point: Rufa Mae has made up with "S.O.P." co-host Richard Gomez who raised a ruckus after questioning Erik's gender. Rufa Mae even guested in "S.O.P." musical director Tats Faustino's music video, "Dehin-Dehin," which was directed by Richard.

For his part, Erik insisted that he has nothing against Richard and their other detractors. "I have no problem even if I hear bad things about me. It's hard to have enemies in this business. It's best to remain calm. I'll ignore the rumors for as long as they don't hurt my family and Peachy (Rufa Mae)."

The latest intrigue about the couple involved a hush-hush wedding due to an unplanned pregnancy.

Both Rufa Mae and Erik laughed off the scuttlebutt.

"We won't hide it," she said. "But it's so funny."

"Hopefully, we'd get there, but not now. We still have so many unfulfilled dreams in our career. We want to enjoy each other's company first," he said.

Their partnership has helped them grow, personally and professionally, she said.

"Every Sunday, we go to Victory (Christian Fellowship). Erik and I are in the same cell group as Piolo Pascual, Rica Peralejo, Sam Milby, Toni Gonzaga and Baron Geisler. We attend Bible study after our Sunday shows," Erik related.

They shrugged off allegations that they're just using each other.

"What matters is that we're happy. I have nothing to say [to our critics]. I don't have to explain to anyone. *Bahala na sila*," Erik said.

"We help each other, when it comes to work. For example, I give him advice about his wardrobe," she clarified. "He sometimes gives me tips about singing. But most of the time, he just laughs at me!"

"No, I tell her about the right techniques. I coach her," he said.

"Once, I wanted to impress him, so I sang a Japanese song. I thought he wouldn't notice if I made a mistake because he couldn't understand the lyrics," she cracked.

That's exactly what he loves about her.

"Her sense of humor," he said.

"Even if I'm mad, he still thinks I'm joking," she said. "When he realizes that I'm serious, he's super apologetic *naman*."

She credited Erik for the resurgence of her singing career. "Now, I do shows left and right. Our back-to-back concert ("When Erik Met Rufa") has a repeat at the Aliw Theater on Feb. 16."

That's probably how they'll spend the Valentine season, they said: On the concert stage.

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 ERAGON
MTRCB. GP
12.00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

2 SAW 3
MTRCB. R-18
12 20, 2 45, 5 10, 7:35, 10:00

3 BLOOD DIAMOND
MTRCB. R-13

4 DEJA VU
MTRCB. PG-13
1 30, 4.20, 7 10, 10:00

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ERAGON 12:20 / 2:40 / 5:00 / 7:20 / 9:50	KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 1:00 / 3 10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	THE BLOOD DIAMOND 1:05 / 4:00 / 6:55 / 9:50	ERAGON 2:00 / 4:20 / 6:40 / 9:00

Ali MALL 5

1 AGENT X-44	2 SAW 3 1:20 / 3:45 / 6:10 / 8:35	3 DEJAVU 12:00 / 2:40 / 5:20 / 8:00
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	5 ERAGON 12:10 / 2:15 / 4:20 / 6:25 / 8:30	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 SAW 3	2 DÉJÀ VU	3 ROB-B-HOOD	4 AGENT X44
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 BLOOD DIAMOND	2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO	3 THX DÉJÀ VU GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 INNOCENT VOICES	5 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES	6 ERAGON	7 SAW 3
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 SAW 3	2 DÉJÀ VU		
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX ERAGON GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX DÉJÀ VU GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 INNOCENT VOICES GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SAW 3 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 BLOOD DIAMOND GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX DÉJÀ VU GUARANTEED SEATS	2 ERAGON		
	3 SAW 3	4 AGENT X44	5 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 DÉJÀ VU	2 SAW 3	3 A GOOD YEAR	4 AGENT X44
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 AGENT X44	2 DÉJÀ VU		
	3 SAW 3	4 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES	5 KASAL KASALI KASALO	

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3 SAW 3
4 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
5 AGENT X44
6 BLOOD DIAMOND
7 GRIFFIN and PHOENIX
8 ROB-B-HOOD
9 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
10 INDIE SINE FESTIVAL

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1 DEJA VU
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
5 AGENT X44
6 SAW 3
7 ERAGON

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1 ERAGON
2 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 DEJA VU
6 SAW 3
7 ROB-B-HOOD
8 AGENT X44

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3 AGENT X44
5 SAW 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
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4 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES

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4 SAW 3

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6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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4 KAMASUTRA
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 DECK THE HALLS

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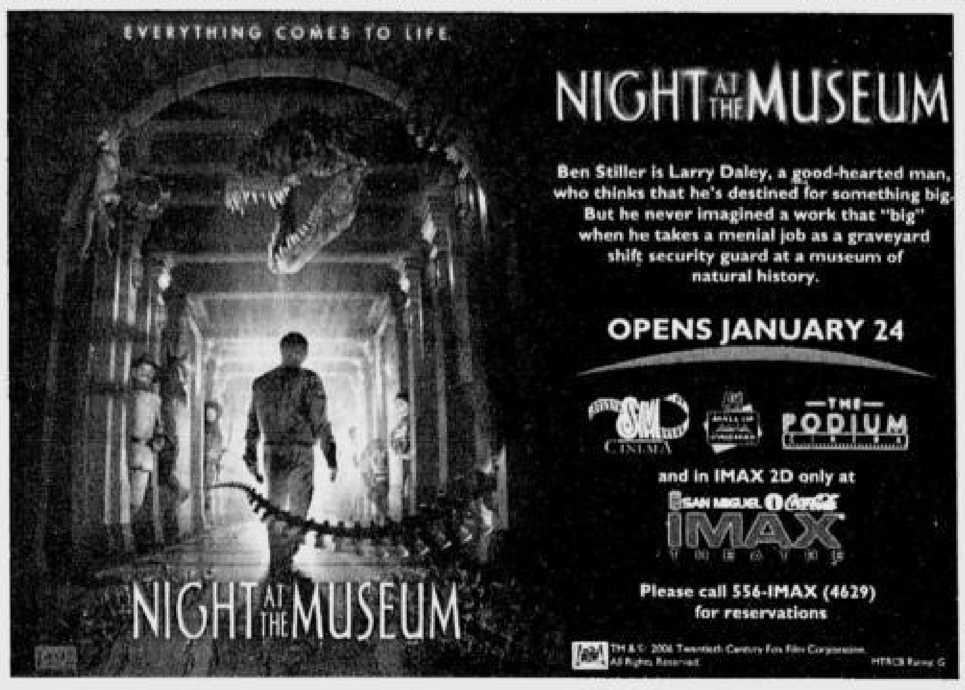

Ben Stiller is Larry Daley, a good-hearted man, who thinks that he's destined for something big. But he never imagined a work that "big" when he takes a menial job as a graveyard shift security guard at a museum of natural history.

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1 DEJA VU
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

PREMIERE CINEMA
AGENT X44

CENTERSTAGE
ERAGON

PODIUM
CINEMA 1
DEJA VU
CINEMA 2
ERAGON
633-8976

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The Block
1 DEJA VU
2 AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
3 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
4 ERAGON
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
6 ERAGON
7 ROB-B-HOOD
8 AGENT X44
9 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
10 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
11 BLOOD DIAMOND
12 AGENT X44

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901

1 DEJA VU
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 AGENT X44
5 BLOOD DIAMOND
6 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
7 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA
8 MANO PO 5
9 ROB-B-HOOD
10 ERAGON
11 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
12 ENTENG KABISOTE 3

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749

1 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
2 MANO PO 5
3 AGENT X44
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 ROB-B-HOOD
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
7 DEJA VU
8 ERAGON
9 AGENT X44
10 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
11 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
12 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416

1 DEJA VU
2 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
3 ERAGON
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 AGENT X44
6 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
7 ROB-B-HOOD
8 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
9 BLOOD DIAMOND
10 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488

1 ERAGON
2 DEJA VU
3 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
AGENT X44

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888

1 DEJA VU
2 AGENT X44
3 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 ERAGON
6 BLOOD DIAMOND
7 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
8 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
9 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055

1 DEJA VU
2 AGENT X44
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 ERAGON

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240

1 ERAGON
2 DEJA VU
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
6 DEJA VU
7 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
8 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
9 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
10 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
11 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
12 AGENT X44

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04

1 DEJA VU
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 AGENT X44
4 ERAGON

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917

1 DEJA VU
2 ERAGON
3 AGENT X44
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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1 DEJA VU
2 AGENT X44
3 ERAGON
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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DEJA VU
X44
ARTHUR

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1 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
3 ERAGON
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 DEJA VU
6 AGENT X44
7 ROB-B-HOOD
8 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45

1 DEJA VU
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 ERAGON
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 AGENT X44
6 THE RETURN

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17

1 DEJA VU
2 AGENT X44
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 BLOOD DIAMOND

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2 AGENT X44
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 AGENT X44

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2 DEJA VU
3 AGENT X44
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 3
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 DEJA VU
3 AGENT X44
4 SPIRIT TRAP

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1 AGENT X44
2 ROB-B-HOOD
3 DEJA VU
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39

1 DEJA VU
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 ERAGON
4 AGENT X44

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1 ERAGON
2 DEJA VU
3 AGENT X44
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341265-66

1 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 ERAGON
3 DEJA VU
4 AGENT X44

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1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ERAGON
3 DEJA VU
4 A GOOD YEAR
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
7 AGENT X44
8 ZU WARRIORS

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422

1 TENACIOUS D
2 RESERVED
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
4 AGENT X44
5 DEJA VU
6 ERAGON
7 RESERVED
8 DECK THE HALLS

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998

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2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 AGENT X44
4 ROB-B-HOOD
5 BOA
6 DEJA VU

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3 AGENT X44
4 ERAGON

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A GLOBAL WARNING

Former US Vice President Al Gore presses a timely issue worth everybody's time: global warming. Gore addresses the issue in his surprisingly funny, engaging, open and downright way with facts and predictions that will eventually convince us to stand and make a difference. "An Inconvenient Truth" lets us re-examine that global warming, more than the usual political agenda, is the biggest challenge of our global civilization.

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'Stomp the Yard' tops box office

LOS ANGELES—THE dance flick "Stomp the Yard" was a step ahead of the competition at the box office, debuting as the No. 1 weekend movie with $22 million.

The movie stars Columbus Short as a raw but talented dancer at the center of a step competition between rival college fraternities.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday to Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Media By Numbers LLC:

1) "Stomp the Yard," $22 million; 2) "Night at the Museum," $17.1 million; 3) "The Pursuit of Happyness," $9.1 million; 4) "Dreamgirls," $8.1 million; 5) "Freedom Writers," $7.1 million; 6) "Children of Men," $6.4 million; 7) "Alpha Dog," $6.1 million; 8) "Primeval," $6 million; 9) "Arthur and the Invisibles," $4.3 million; 10) "The Good Shepherd," $3.9 million. *AP*

Impetus, impact and Imago

From page D6

learned was that in this life we're in, we try to make the most of what we have and we're grateful. Maximize and treat it like the last day of your life.

Tim: For me, the most important thing we've learned is to get along professionally. *Iba-iba yung pakikitungo*, so you tend to learn to get along with people professionally. *Medyo naging* business scene *na rin yung* Imago *kahit papaano. Ako, may kaunting kita na rin*, so *iba yung pagtrato ko sa* group. The group encompasses the manager, the PAs and everybody else. So we learned how to deal with people we're working with.

Myrene: I think, for me, it's keeping track of what's enjoyable about being in Imago and in the business, remembering playing with the band and being around them on and off-stage. You have to keep remembering that, because the bigger you get *pala*, the more bull s--t there is.

Aia: Oh yeah! That comes your way.

Myrene: When we were starting out, we were just happy to play one small club once a month, *tapos ngayon*, it's different. You have to keep track of what made you fun in the first place.

What's on top of your New Year's wish list?

Aia: Five million pesos. Covered *na lahat 'yon! Marunong ako mag*-invest, *eh*.

Zach: I want a key to the 6 series Coupe BMW; that, or a key to a Ferrari. That would make me so happy.

Myrene: PS3 with a year's supply of games! Or, an artist video recorder!

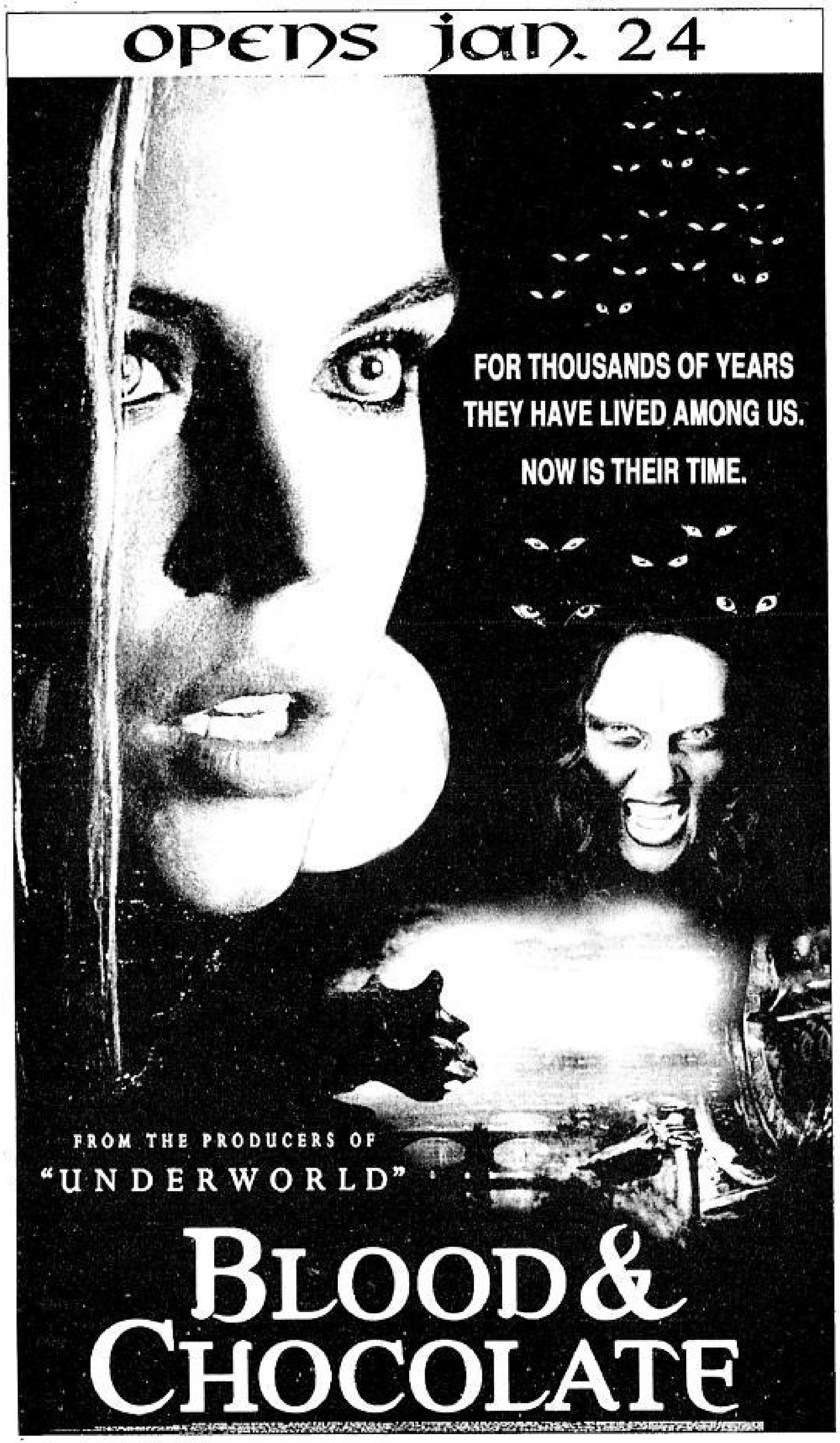
Tim: Something that I really need but I don't know what it is yet! More gigs for Imago!

DID YOU KNOW...

Kylie Minogue calls off two shows

LONDON—Australian singer Kylie Minogue has canceled two concerts on her comeback tour following treatment for breast cancer because of a respiratory tract infection.

The London-based diva only managed to perform half of a scheduled two-and-a-half hour concert Saturday in Manchester, northern England, because of the infection, spokesperson John Bills said. *AP*



OPENS JAN. 24

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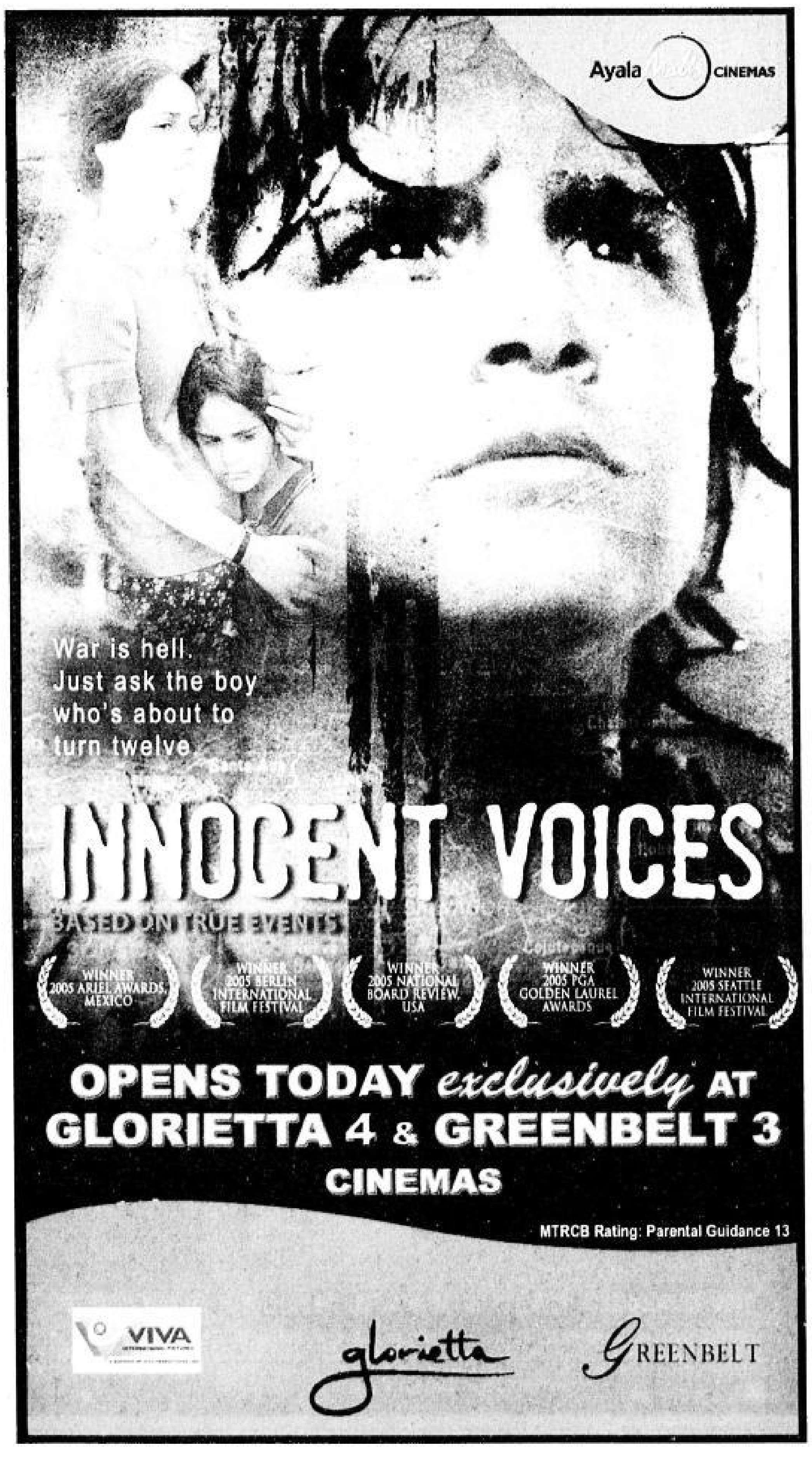

Ayala CINEMAS

War is hell. Just ask the boy who's about to turn twelve.

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1	ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES		GP
2	ERAGON	1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00	G
3	DEJA VU	2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:05	PG-13
4	SAW 3	1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00	PG-13

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"DiCAPRIO IS A FORMIDABLE FORCE OF NATURE" - CHRISTY LEMIRE, ASSOCIATED PRESS

"UNDENIABLY GRIPPING." - DAVID ANSEN, NEWSWEEK

LEONARDO DiCAPRIO
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DJIMON HOUNSOU

From THE DIRECTOR of GLORY and THE LAST SAMURAI

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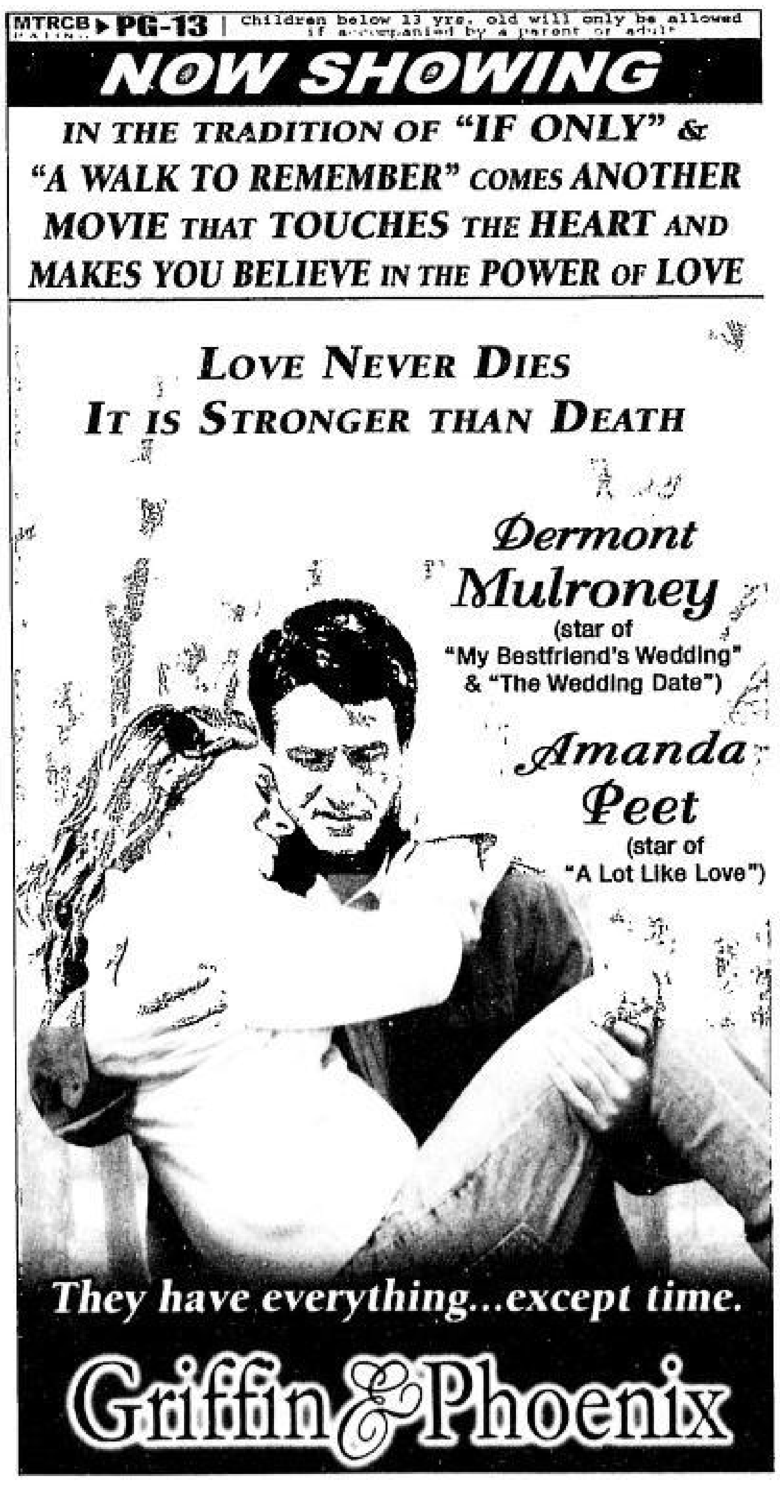

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1 (DOLBY)	ERAGON
2 (DOLBY)	SAW 3
3 (DOLBY)	BLOOD DIAMOND
4 (DOLBY)	DÉJÀ VU

PREMIERE
ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
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Tel 816.4234 / 816.4236

1	ERAGON
2	DÉJÀ VU
3	AGENT X 44
4	ARTHUR & INVISIBLES

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

3	AGENT X 44
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	DÉJÀ VU
5	RESRVED

metropolis star cinema
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(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994

1	AGENT X 44
2	DÉJÀ VU
3	ERAGON
4	SAW

THEATRES

1	ERAGON
2	AGENT X 44
3	DÉJÀ VU

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1	AGENT X 44
2	DÉJÀ VU
3	RESRVED
4	RESRVED

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1	SAW
2	ARTHUR & INVISIBLES
3	DÉJÀ VU
4	ERAGON
5	BLOOD DIAMOND
6	DÉJÀ VU
7	ROB-B-HOOD
8	AGENT X 44
9	AGENT X 44
10	KASAL KASALI KASALO

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY)	KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2 (DOLBY)	AGENT X 44
3 (DOLBY)	DÉJÀ VU
4 (DOLBY)	RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

1 (DOLBY)	DÉJÀ VU
2	ERAGON
3	AGENT X 44
4	ARTHUR & INVISIBLES
5	SAW

THE MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
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1	AGENT X 44
2	DÉJÀ VU
3	ROB-B-HOOD
4	RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	AGENT X 44
2	DÉJÀ VU
3	SAW

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)-(4449346)

1	ERAGON
2	DÉJÀ VU

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1	DÉJÀ VU
2	AGENT X 44
3	SAW
4	ERAGON

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	MANO PO-5
2	KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687 6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES
2 (DOLBY)	ERAGON
3 (DOLBY)	DÉJÀ VU
4 (DOLBY)	SAW 3

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Cinema 2000 Waltermart
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1	ERAGON
2	DÉJÀ VU
3	AGENT X 44
4	

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

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2	RESERVED
3	RESERVED
4	RESERVED

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1	DÉJÀ VU
2	AGENT X 44
3	KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
2	AGENT X 44
3	DÉJÀ VU
4	ERAGON

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1	DÉJÀ VU
2	ERAGON/KASAL KASALI KASALO
3	KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1	AGENT X 44
2	SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL-8

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1	ROB-B-HOOD
2	ENTENG KABISOTE - 3

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1	ERAGON
2	PURI
3	SABIK SA HALIK
4	ROB-B-HOOD

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1	DÉJÀ VU
2	BABASAGIN CRYSTAL
3	ROB-B-HOOD
4	AGENT X 44
5	ERAGON

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	SPIRIT TRAP
2	ERAGON
3	AGENT X 44
4	DÉJÀ VU

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	ARTHUR & INVISIBLE
2	ROB-B-HOOD

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Impetus, impact and Imago

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

CREATIVE QUARTET. (from left) Tim Cacho, Aia de Leon, Zach Lucero, Myrene Academia

FIVE YEARS AFTER the release of Imago's debut album, "Probably Not But Most Definitely," the very busy local band is now enjoying a broader range of listeners, and is hoping to continue experimenting with their brand of rock music.

The creative quartet of vocalist-lyricist Aia de Leon, drummer Zach Lucero, bassist Myrene Academia and guitarist Tim Cacho is also appreciative of being able to work with similar, fun-loving people from the scene. The members have allowed the remixing of some of their songs into techno versions by deejay friends and have collaborated with similarly dedicated musician producers in their albums.

Their third and latest, the mostly wholesome "Blush," continues to gain new fans, listeners who are just discovering their melodic songs about optimism, heartbreak, celebration and spirituality.

Aia, Zach, Tim and Myrene are eager to start writing and recording songs for the fourth Imago CD soon. It is also slated to be released by Universal Records eventually, but work on that won't begin just yet. They are currently promoting "Blush," performing at different venues, enjoying making music videos and meeting fans, who now range from really young kids to grandparents. It's a direction they didn't expect, they recently revealed to INQUIRER Entertainment. But they're happy that even their older works are getting rediscovered now, and they're hoping their collective artistry will connect with more people in different places in the future.

TAKE FIVE

Growing up, did you have any formal music training?

Zach: I had, with (veteran drummer) Mar Dizon, a long time ago.

Aia: Me, none. It wasn't encouraged when I was young. I was more encouraged to become a doctor or a lawyer than a musician. High school, I didn't have any clubs. Only the glee club was open for membership. It had two parts, the singing and the production staff. I said, if I don't make it in the singing, I'd be happy with the production staff. *Eh, pumasa sa* singing. In the company of other singers, *nag*-enjoy *naman ako*. College, school band *lang*. It was informal. I got hooked when I had the concept of writing my own songs by that time. I picked up guitar-playing later.

Tim: Like with teenage boys everywhere, I started to pick up the guitar because of a girl. Actually it started in high school, when I was 14, 15-ish. From there, it became an obsessive hobby. *Napamahal na ako*. Self-taught *na rin*. Along the way, I try and learn new stuff from the Net, from people that I with. No formal training for me.

Myrene: When I was a kid, I learned some piano, first grade, and then classical guitar in high school. After that, I shifted somewhat.

What are you listening to now? And who are your favorite music artists?

Zach: Now, it's Carolina Soares. Favorite: Morrissey.

Aia: Jeff Buckley, Ani Di Franco, Cynthia Alexander, *ang dami*. Lately I've been listening to Chung King, LCD Sound System, The Rapture. They inspire me; they throw me off in a different direction, which I like because my point of view gets reset or rejuvenated. I'm back to a blank canvas again. I get encouraged to just go for it. Nothing holds me down. I don't want to have too many crutches. *Mas lumalabas yung* honesty, creativity and integrity *ko*.

Tim: Now, I have Taking Back Sunday in my car. On the flip side, smooth jazz. *Pero iba-iba*. Between the four of us, we listen to everything *para malawak talaga*. I must listen to the Beatles' new album "Love"!

Myrene: Sonic Youth. The new Beck album is really good. The Roots *na bago, maganda rin*. I like LCD Sound System, Copeland, Snow Patrol, New Order, Pavement and Bikini Kill.

Describe your growing fan base.

Aia: Solid. And wide!

Zach: Very wide. I'm talking about four types of fans. The first album fans, fans of the second and fans of the third. The fourth type is the all-encompassing lover of all the albums. *May kanya-kanyang* gangs.

Aia: They have a deep understanding; they respect the growth and *nasakyan nila yung* change.

Zach: They grew with us. We're getting more appreciative first and second album fans now because of the third. We got these new kids discovering us for the first time through our third album. They become fans of the older albums too. Some of the first album fans, when they heard the second one, so-so, type *nila, minsan hindi*. Some got so attached with the first, it's so ingrained in their hearts that they cannot accept any other sound. There are people like that; I respect them for that. And I appreciate them; we wouldn't be where we are now if it weren't for them, as well.

Tim: *Ngayon*, kids!

Aia: I love it when kids watch!

Zach: High school, college students, too. *Mga lola*.

Where do you hope to bring Imago in the coming years?

Aia: *Natutuwa kami sa ginagawa namin. Kasi*, if not, why continue? *Kailangan*, when we start writing songs, *may* smile *yung* heart *namin*.

Tim: For me, I just hope that if we're still gonna be around for the next three to five years, we're still enjoying what we're doing and we're still friends. You can't really tell what's gonna happen, there are many factors ...

Aia: *Pwedeng mabuntis si* Tim! Or *ayaw na niyang magbanda*.

Tim: Or *pwedeng magka*-resurgence *ng* polka music, *so taob na kaagad kami*. So you never know. *But sana, magkakaibigan pa rin; masaya pa rin kami sa ginagawa namin*.

What's the most important thing you learned with Imago?

Myrene: Wow!

Aia: *Isang malaking* "wow!" Because, for me, the journey has been great, awesome; I've never felt so blessed. It's like I've been showered with grace from God. Everything's great; I never expected *na ganito ang mangyayari*.

Zach: The most important thing we

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1pm • THE BLOCK
5pm • SM CITY FAIRVIEW

January 25 • Thursday
1pm • SM CITY STA. ROSA
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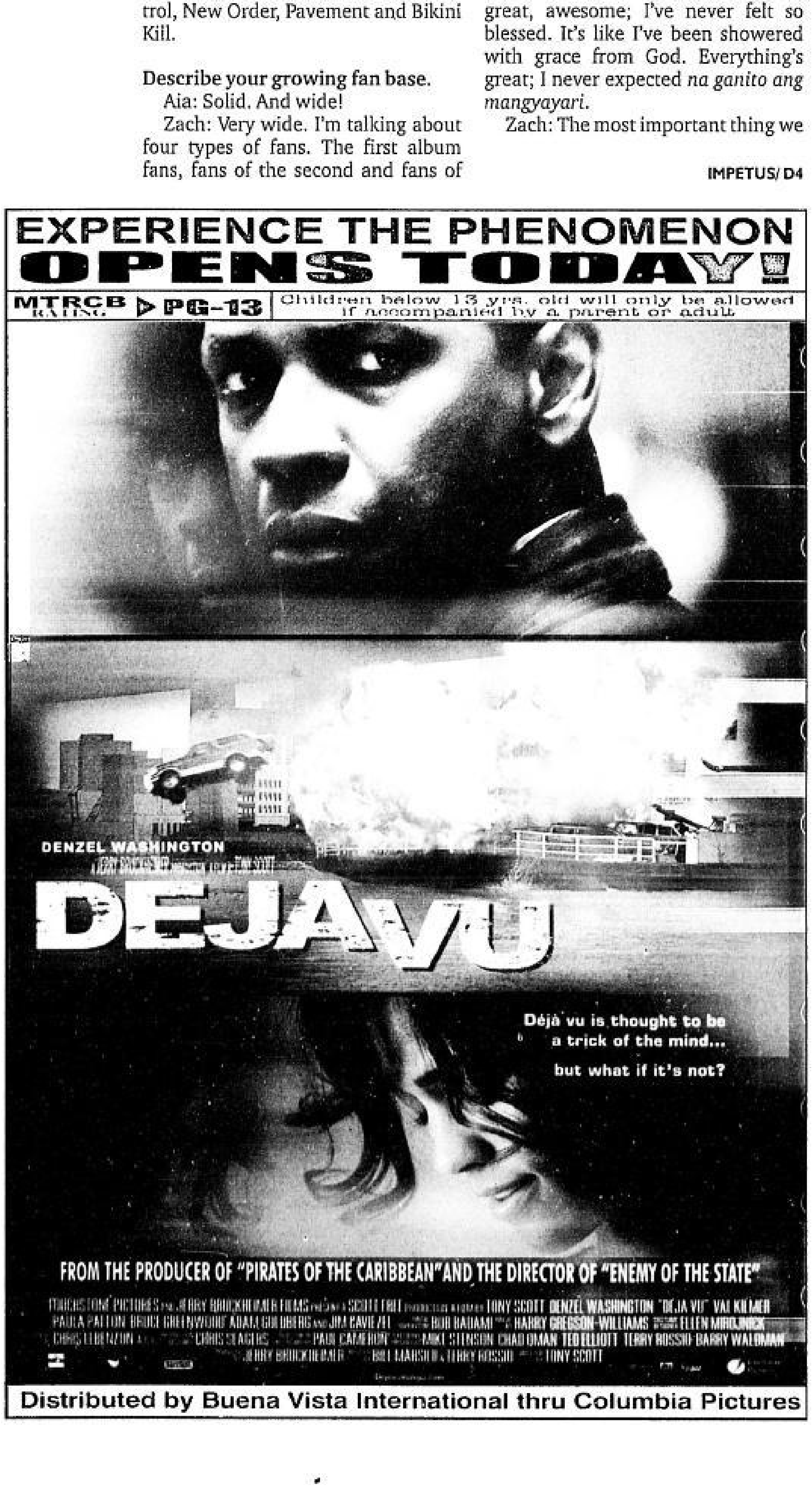
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Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
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